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W e e k l y

A-League Round 22 Friday 24th Feb - Sunday 26th Feb 2012

This Week's Line Up



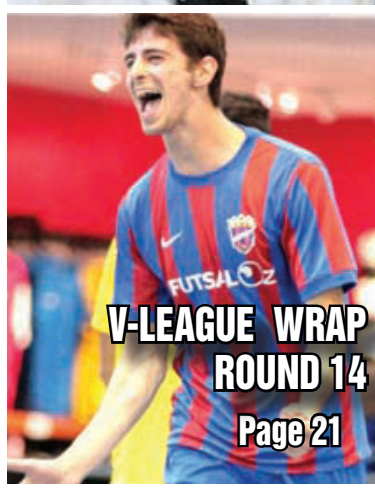
FRED
SOUVENIR POSTER
Page 14



HAL ROUND 22
REWIND
Page 10



GOLD COAST
UNITED SAGA
Page 20



V-LEAGUE WRAP
ROUND 14
Page 21

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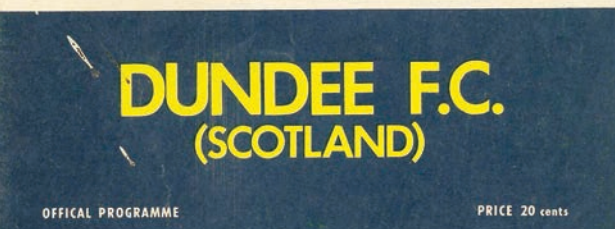
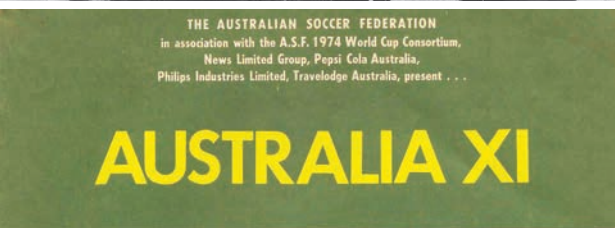
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Juniors April 6th 2012 | Seniors April 7th 2012



Presentation to the Berlin Hagenbeck Zoo by the Australian team in Germany, 21 June 1974. Left to right: K R Roesler, Group Commander J Wilson, John Barclay, (team manager), and Sir Arthur George, (President of the ASF).



Front cover of the program for the match between an Australian XI and Dundee in Adelaide on 17 May 1972. Source: Don Campbell collection. Don Campbell refereed the game and it was almost certainly the first at which the Soccerroo logo appeared.

On The Ball

With HOTSPUR

Emus it is—they can run and kick!

SO it will be Emus. That is the overwhelming vote by the fans who wrote in suggesting a name for our national team.

Almost four to one in fact. But I also had some surprising suggestions.

Not the least being one which said, "What's this bloody silly idea about a name anyway?"

"What's wrong with calling the team Australia? The cricketers do and who cares about Kangaroos and Wallabies anyway?"

The Emu, apart from being part of our national emblem, also has the attribute of being fast and with a mighty kick.

Whether anyone else in the world knows these facts is doubtful.

It will be up to our players when they play all over the world to prove they can run faster and kick harder than anyone else.

Second most popular name was "Wattles," with the green and gold stressed.

Then we had "Jackaroos" because it is for men who do a man's job.

And there were Wombats, Walleroos, Bandicoots, Boomerangs, Birubieds, Baddawalers, Merinos, Koalas, Woomeras.

And one top personality, who shall be nameless suggested Sharks.

So Emus it is, and if Mr Filocano of Collaroy contacts me at the end of January, he will get his pass.

I say this because Hotspur is now signing off for 1967 and taking a break . . .

★ ★ ★ ★

'Emus it is.' Tony Horstead's column records the result of his find-a-name competition in 1967. Source: Daily Mirror, 8 December 1967, p. 90.

SOCCERROO!

Soccerroo tee shirts will be all the rage once Australia's World Cup campaign gets under way. However, they are already on sale right now. Have you got yours yet?

Kids wearing Soccerroo tee shirt and tank top, Soccer World, 28 July 1972, p. 2.

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Soccerroo consortium advertisement with the Soccerroo logo, Soccer World, 29 September 1972, p. 3.



Peter Wilson and Indonesian captain Anwar Udjang exchange pennants prior to their match at the Senayan Stadium in Djakarta on 7 October 1972. Source: Foto Pramadi, Laurie Schwab collection, Deakin University Library. Compare this pennant with the one used at the World Cup in Germany in 1974. INSET: Official player's exchange pennant used at the 1974 World Cup, featuring the Soccerroo mascot, but not the word.

Unanswered questions

Finding out where the name Soccerroos comes from has been an interesting quest for David Hearder over several years. As always in history, puzzles remain and new questions arise. Who was the cameraman who worked with Tony Horstead? Who actually designed the logo for the ASF? Did anyone else use the name in 1972 apart from Horstead and Gautier? Goal! Weekly would be delighted to hear from readers and others who can add to or correct the story we have told here.

Please feel free to contact:
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roy@sesasport.com.au

David Hearder:
davesearches@yahoo.com.au

Goal! Weekly:
news@goalweekly.com



Four books which tell different stories about the origins of the Soccerroos name. Photo: Roy Hay.

Sources which are now out of date

History never stands still and our research will not be the last word on the subject. We welcome corrections and additional information. Meantime, the following sources might be updated in the light of our research.

Wikipedia
Origin of "Soccerroos"
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australia_national_association_football_team#Origin_of_22_Soccerroos.22
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australia_national_association_football_team#Origin_of_22_Soccerroos.22>

The team's nickname was coined by Sydney journalist, Tony Horstead, in 1967 in his coverage of a "goodwill" tour by the national team to South Vietnam. [44]

[44] Michael Cockerill, Australian Soccer's Long Road to the Top, Lothian Books, Port Melbourne, Victoria, 1998, p. 12. ISBN 978-0850918928.

The Roar
Soccerroos
<http://www.theroar.com.au/football/soccerroos/>

The Soccerroos' history stems from the first Australian national football team which was convened in 1922. The nickname 'Soccerroos' was coined by journalist Tony Horstead in 1967. But it wasn't until reaching the 1974 World Cup finals that the Soccerroos came to prominence. After switching to the Asian Football Confederation in 2005, the Soccerroos confirmed their second World Cup finals appearance the same year.

One Fantastic Goal
Australia went on to play and win the Vietnam National Day tournament in Saigon in 1967... It was at that tournament that the nickname 'Soccerroos' was coined by the News Limited journalist Tony Horstead. Although there was never any official baptism under that name for the national team, the term Soccerroos was taken on by players and fans, became a standard piece of media shorthand and was ultimately adopted by the soccer hierarchy.

Trevor Thompson, One Fantastic Goal: A complete history of football in Australia, ABC Books, Sydney, 2006, p. 99.

Our Soccerroos
...the next major tour organised by the ASF in 1967 – a trip to Asia during the heat of the Vietnam War. ...It was on that tour that a journalist named Tony Hoystead [sic] first referred to the Australian national team as 'The Soccerroos'

[Ray Baartz:] "... (journalist) Tony Hoystead [sic] travelled with the team... It was Tony who coined the name "Soccerroo" and began to write his articles referring to us by that name"

Neil Montagnana Wallace, Our Soccerroos, Random House Australia, Milsons Point, NSW, 2004, pp. 2 & 56.

History of the Soccerroos
Talking of FIFA World Cups, the Soccerroos—as Daily Mirror football reporter Tony Horstead had dubbed them back in 1967—made their inaugural appearance at the 1974 FIFA World Cup in Germany.

Sue Behrent, History of the Soccerroos, Penguin Books, Camberwell, Victoria, 2011, p. 4. This book uses the name Soccerroos for its brief match reports from 1967 onwards.

FFA website
Australia's campaign for the 1970 World Cup saw the Qantas Soccerroos knock out Japan, South Korea and Rhodesia.

Australia in the FIFA World Cup: Official Soccerroos History
FFA website, <http://www.footballaustralia.com.au/soccerroos/history>
Accessed 18 February 2012.

This short history does not mention the origins of the name specifically, but it introduces a double anachronism by referring to the 1970 Australian team as Qantas Soccerroos. The team did fly with Qantas, however, but naming rights were a thing of the future.

From Emus to Soccceroos

The real origins of national team's name at last

By Roy Hay and David Header

On Wednesday the Soccceroos take on Saudi Arabia in the final group match of the first Asian round of qualification for the FIFA World Cup in Brazil in 2014. Where did the name Soccceroos come from and when?

Two simple questions, you might think, but if you Google the term you will get umpteen versions of the same story, nearly all of which go back to Michael Cockerill's Australian Soccer's Long Road to the Top, published in 1998. 'It was Sydney journalist Tony Horstead (sic) who coined the term "Soccceroos" for the national team thirty years before. In 1967 the team, under coach Joe Vlasits, took the nickname away with it on a tour to Vietnam—a tour arranged at the height of the Vietnam war.' [1] <#_edn1>

There are three other published claims about the origins that sometimes crop up in discussion. In his autobiography Sheilas, Wogs and Poofers Johnny Warren says it was in 1971 prior to another tour to Vietnam in 1972 that

Tony Horstead first used the term.[2] <#_edn2> Sid Grant, whose collection of information was published in 1974, says the word was adopted in 1972–73: 'The name and accompanying badge were the work of a leading Sydney sporting journalist and his colleague, a news photographer.[3] <#_edn3> Laurie Schwab asserts that the national team was dubbed the Soccceroos during the successful 1973–74 World Cup mission.[4] <#_edn4> By 1974 the word Soccceroos is being used without explanation in Australian Women's Weekly, so it was obviously in common usage by then.[5] <#_edn5>

Tony Horstead did not accompany the team to Vietnam in November 1967. He wrote a soccer column in the Sydney Daily Mirror, under the byline of 'Hotspur'. After the team came home on 1 December he asked his readers to send in suggestions for a name for the national team and offered a prize of a free pass to all matches the following season. A week later he reported that 'Emus' was the overwhelming favourite by almost four to one, next came Wattles, then Jackaroos, Wombats, Bandicoots, Boomerangs, Birubieds,

Baddawalers, Walleroos, Merinos, Koalas, Woomeras, Sharks, but no Soccceroos.[6] <#_edn6>

In April 1970 the Australian team went back to Vietnam and played two matches and later in the year the Australian Soccer Federation (ASF) sent Rale Rasic and his team on a world tour with the long-term goal being qualification for the World Cup in West Germany in 1974. Hotspur's columns just refer to the Australian soccer team or the national team and there is no mention of Soccceroos or Emus.

Two years later the ASF launched its formal World Cup qualification bid on 3 May 1972. Backed by \$100,000 in sponsorship from Pepsi Cola (Australia), Travelodge Australia, Philips Industries and News Limited, Sir Arthur George, President of the ASF, unveiled the Australian national team icon for the campaign.[7] <#_edn7> The logo consisted of a kangaroo wearing football boots surrounded by the legend 'World Cup 1974 Soccceroo'.

Tony Horstead had probably never forgotten his attempt to get a punchy nickname for the national team and

the next morning he had turned the logo into that name. A key sentence in his column reads: 'The Soccceroos will be the best prepared sporting team ever to represent Australia in a major event'.[8] <#_edn8> The logo got its next public outing when Dundee from Scotland played an Australia XI in Adelaide on 17 May 1972. Matches against club sides were not regarded as full internationals and Horstead was keen to tie the name of the Soccceroos to the national team. So later that year, when Australia returned to Vietnam in October 1972, he could focus on that connection.

On 29 September 1972 Horstead casually mentioned that he was accompanying the team as 'Australia's Soccceroos set forth next Thursday on their Asian tour'.[9] <#_edn9> It is clear from the context that this is a term that would already be familiar to his readers. Horstead used the term regularly thereafter.[10] <#_edn10> Lou Gautier of Soccer World also accompanied the Australian team and while they were in Vietnam he wrote about the children who crowded around the players as they trained at Cong Hoa: 'They were rewarded for their interest

with Soccceroo badges. The kangaroo emblem is a sensation and I think that Australia's national team has now won its spurs to be known world-wide as the Soccceroos, like the "Wallabies" in Rugby Union and the "Kangaroos" in League.'[11] <#_edn11>

So in 1972 the Soccceroos team name was coined by Horstead who continued to use it in the Daily Mirror and other News Limited papers. The dedicated soccer press began to use the name early in 1973, but it was towards the end of that year before the other metropolitan dailies adopted the usage and not without protest. The Sydney Morning Herald argued on its front page on 15 November 1973:

Now that the Australian Soccer team is basking in honour and glory after its World Cup victory over South Korea it can surely do without the name 'Soccceroos' which is increasingly being applied to it. Of course, the names 'Wallabies' and 'Kangaroos' have already been taken by national teams of other codes, but if the soccer team is to have a collective nickname what's wrong with being known as the 'Emus'. After all, that strong speedy—although not too bright—bird is so authentically

Australian that it has a proud place on the Coat of Arms.[12] <#_edn12> The mixture of poor humour and condescension was typical of the non-soccer press and in this case the Fairfax paper may have had its nose put out of joint by the Murdoch-owned Mirror. The tide of popular support for the Soccceroos on and off the field following successful qualification for the World Cup assured that the name would stick. At the final tournament in West Germany in 1974 the name was ubiquitous.

When Football Federation Australia replaced Soccer Australia in 2005, the new CEO John O'Neill thought that the Soccceroos name would disappear in time.[13] <#_edn13> That did not happen. In 2012 it is so firmly engrained in people's consciousness that it is just about the only survivor from old soccer into the brave new world of football under the FFA.

David Header has been researching this topic for several years and we are indebted to Louise Moran, who spent several hours ploughing through microfilm and hard copy newspapers on our behalf.



The Australian team before the South Korean match on 28 October 1973 at the Sydney Sports Ground. Life size Soccceroo mascot at right. Source: Johnny Warren & Andrew Dettre, Soccer: The Australian Way, Summit Books, Paul Hamlyn. Dee Why West, NSW, 1974, p. 117.



Tony Horstead, Pix, 12 May 1962, p. 18.

[1] <#_ednref1> Michael Cockerill, Australian Soccer's Long Road to the Top, Lothian Books, Port Melbourne, 1998, p. 12.

[2] <#_ednref2> Johnny Warren with Andy Harper and Josh Whittington, Sheilas, Wogs and Poofers: An incomplete biography of Johnny Warren and Soccer in Australia, Random House, Sydney, 2002, p. 133.

[3] <#_ednref3> Sid Grant, Jack Pollard's Soccer Records, Jack Pollard,

North Sydney, 1974, p. 258.

[4] <#_ednref4> Laurie Schwab, The Soccceroos and their Opponents, Newspress, Melbourne, n.d., [1979] p. 4.

[5] <#_ednref5> 'Wonder how the Soccceroos would take to girls getting in on their act?', Australian Women's Weekly, Wednesday 9 July 1975, p. 40; 'They even sold the Australian Soccceroos' colors with a kangaroo-style tail sewed on. That one kept the

fans on the hop.' Australian Women's Weekly, Wednesday 28 August 1974, p. 113.

[6] <#_ednref6> Tony Horstead, 'Emus it is—they can run and kick,' On the ball with Hotspur, Daily Mirror, 8 December 1967, p. 90; see also Tony Horstead, 'Thanks to Tour Team', On the ball with Hotspur, Daily Mirror, 1 December 1967, p. 73.

[7] <#_ednref7> Soccer World, 12 May 1972, p. 7; Daily Telegraph, 4

May 1972, p. 53; Sydney Morning Herald, 4 May 1972, pp. 15 & 16; Sun (Sydney), 4 May 1972, p. 69; Australian, 4 May 1972, p. 24; Daily Mirror, 4 May 1972, p. 65; Australian Soccer Federation, 11th Annual Report for the period ending 31 August 1972, ASF, 1972, p. 4.

[8] <#_ednref8> Tony Horstead, 'We're after Soccer's World Cup – Mirror Backing \$100,000 Effort', Daily Mirror, Thursday 4 May 1972, p. 65.

[9] <#_ednref9> Tony Horstead, 'Short shift for slackers on Asian tour', On the ball with Hotspur, Daily Mirror, 29 September 1972, p. 79.

[10] <#_ednref10> For example, Tony Horstead, 'Soccer stars face big cut,' Daily Mirror, 3 October 1972, p. 58; 'Soccceroos eager for bright opener,' Daily Mirror, 7 October 1972, p. 9. There are many subsequent examples that month.

[11] <#_ednref11> Lou Gautier, Soccer World, 27 October 1972, p. 3.

[12] <#_ednref12> Sydney Morning Herald, 15 November 1973, p. 1.

[13] <#_ednref13> Michael Cockerill, 'O'Neill wants to lose Roos in the name of progress', Sydney Morning Herald, Friday 14 January 2005, p. 36.

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SCOREBOARD

TABLE	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Central Coast Mariners	22	13	5	4	36	20	16	44
2 Brisbane Roar	22	11	5	6	41	24	17	38
3 Perth Glory	22	10	4	8	33	27	6	34
4 Wellington Phoenix	22	10	3	9	29	26	3	33
5 Melbourne Heart	22	8	6	8	29	29	0	30
6 Sydney FC	22	8	6	8	30	36	-6	30
7 Newcastle Jets	22	8	4	10	30	34	-4	28
8 Melbourne Victory	22	5	10	7	28	34	-6	25
9 Adelaide United	22	5	8	9	24	38	-14	23
10 Gold Coast United	22	3	7	12	24	36	-12	16

THIS WEEK	Week 23	Fixture	Venue	Local	AEDT
	Fri 24 Feb 2012	Newcastle Jets v Adelaide United	Ausgrid Stadium	8:00pm	8:00pm
	Sat 25 Feb 2012	Sydney FC v Wellington Phoenix	Sydney Football Stadium	5:30pm	5:30pm
	Sat 25 Feb 2012	Gold Coast United v Melbourne Victory	Skilled Park	6:45pm	7:45pm
	Sat 25 Feb 2012	Perth Glory v Brisbane Roar	nib Stadium	7:00pm	10:00pm
	Sun 26 Feb 2012	Melbourne Heart v Central Coast Mariners	AAMI Park	5:00pm	5:00pm
NEXT WEEK	Week 24	Fixture	Venue	Local	AEDT
	Fri 2 Mar 2012	Brisbane Roar v Melbourne Heart	Suncorp Stadium	7:00pm	8:00pm
	Sat 3 Mar 2012	Melbourne Victory v Newcastle Jets	AAMI Park	5:30pm	5:30pm
	Sat 3 Mar 2012	Central Coast Mariners v Sydney FC	Bluetongue Stadium	7:45pm	7:45pm
	Sun 4 Mar 2012	Wellington Phoenix v Gold Coast United	Westpac Stadium	4:30pm	2:30pm
	Sun 4 Mar 2012	Adelaide United v Perth Glory	Hindmarsh Stadium	4:30pm	5:00pm

ROUND 22 RESULTS

Melbourne Heart 1 (Eli Babablj 80') Gold Coast United 0	Perth Glory 2 (Hughes 16, Mehmet 59) Newcastle Jets 0
Central Coast Mariners 2 (Rogic 52', Zwaanswijk 83') Wellington Phoenix 0	Adelaide United FC 1 (Barbiero 56') Sydney FC 2 (Chianese 45+1', Mallia 81')
Brisbane Roar 3 (Besart Berisha 1' 32', Henrique (Pen) 38') Melbourne Victory 2 (Harry Kewell 8', 50')	

TOP GOAL SCORERS

15 - Besart Berisha (Roar)
9 - Shane Smeltz (Glory),
Jeremy Brockie (Jets)
8 - Ryan Griffiths (Jets),
7- Bruno Cazarine (SFC),
Matt Simon (Mariners),
Archie Thompson (Victory),
Harry Kewell (Victory),
Carlos Hernandez (Victory),
Mitch Nichols (Roar),



Socceroo selection and a brace against the Roar, makes for a good week for Harry Kewell.

A-LEAGUE TEAM OF THE WEEK ROUND 22

Compiled by Steven Talevski



GK: Ivan Necevski – Necevski makes the team of the week for the second round in a row after having another solid game in goal denying goals to Sergio van Dijk, Ian Ramsey, Nigel Boogaard, Dario Vidosic and Zenon Caravella.

RB: Joshua Ridson – Perth’s young fullback had another impressive performance which was highlighted by a perfect cross to Adam Hughes for the Glory’s opener.

CB: Patrick Zwaanswijk – Zwaanswijk scored his seventh goal of the season with another clinical header which earns him his eighth appearance in Goal Weekly’s team of the week this season.

CB: Bas van den Brink – Perth’s central defender makes it an all Dutch centre of defence in the team of the week after he had a solid defensive game as the Glory move into third spot on the table.

LB: Craig Goodwin – Goodwin continues to use his chance in the Heart first eleven with first choice left back Aziz Behich away on international duty as he becomes a dangerous threat on the left wing for the heart.

RCM: Fred – The Heart captain returned from injury with a typical display in midfield as he played a pivotal role in Melbourne’s only goal on their way to their first victory of 2012.

LCM: Adam Hughes – Hughes came off the bench early in the first half to replace star midfielder Liam Miller and scored Perth’s opener with a tremendous header just minutes after coming onto the pitch. Hughes was also denied later on in the game by Jet’s goalkeeper Ben Kennedy and the wood work for a second goal.

CAM: Tomas Rogic – Rogic continues to set the A-League alight with another influential game on top of the Mariners diamond midfield as he opened the scoring at the Bluetongue Stadium with another left foot strike from outside the penalty area.

RW: Henrique – The Brazilian set up Berisha’s second goal with a simple squared pass before scoring Brisbane’s third from the penalty spot to allow the Roar to keep the pressure on the top of the table Mariners.

LW: Harry Kewell – Melbourne Victory’s marquee man has found his shooting boots with two wonderfully taken goals that kept the Victory in the game against Brisbane Roar.

ST: Besart Berisha – The seventeen time Albanian international may be one of the A-Leagues most controversial figures this season, but continues to be one of the A-League’s most potent strikers with a clinical double in Brisbane’s 3-2 win over Melbourne Victory.

Star Man

Tomas Rogic
Mariners



In just his second start, Tomas Rogic made another impressive performance with his silky foot skills against the Wellington Phoenix. Rogic looks comfortable playing in behind the strikers and was able to score a left foot strike from outside the penalty area for the second week in a row. Rogic will look to continue his hot form with his Mariners contract ending mid-year with a return to Europe a clear possibility.

Thank God It’s Friday... **GW is now available at all good newsagents every Friday**
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Melbourne Heart

HEART



1

Gold Coast United

0

Match Details

Melbourne Heart 1 (Eli Babalj 80')
Gold Coast United 0
Venue: AAMI Park
Referee: Alan Milliner
Attendance: 4,972

Melbourne Heart: 1.Clint Bolton, 2.Michael Marrone, 3.Brendan Hamill, 4.Simon Colosimo, 5.Fred, 7.Rutger Worm, 9.Maycon, 10.Wayne Srhoj, (6.Matt Thompson 71'), 11.Alex Terra (19.Eli Babalj 56'), 13.Jonatan Germano (26. Paul Reid 46'), 15.David Williams, 27.Craig Goodwin.

Unused substitutes: 30.Sebastian Mattei
Yellow cards: Brendan Hamill 5'; Michael Marrone 45+1'; Paul Reid 67'
Red cards: Nil

Gold Coast United: 20.Jerrad Tyson, 2.Josh Brillante, 4.Zac Anderson, 5.Kristian Rees, 7.Golgol Mebrahtu, 11.Jake Barker-Daish (21.Daniel Severino 84'), 14.Ben Halloran, 15.Adama Traore, 17.Chris Harold, 28.Daniel Bowles, 33.Mitch Cooper

Unused substitutes: 30.Brendan White, 26.Ambes Yosief, 31 Daniel Bragg
Yellow cards: Daniel Bowles 25'; Ben Halloran 75' Chris Harold 84'
Red cards: Nil

Heart ends eight match barren run

By Daniel Quinn

Eli Babalj has netted the only goal in Melbourne Heart's 1-0 defeat over a very young Gold Coast United side.

Babalj who started on the bench tapped home the winner on 79 minutes after Josh Brillante gave away the ball. This win is Heart's first in nine games.

After Melbourne Heart's 3-0 defeat to Newcastle Jets coach John van 't Schip made three changes. Babalj, Curtis Good and Paul Reid all made way for David Williams, Brendan Hamill and captain Fred.

Chris O'Connor, the suspended Michael Thwaite, Jonas Sally, Daniel Bragg and Maceo Rigters all made way for the Gold Coast. Youngster Mitch Cooper comes in for his A-League debut and will wear the Captain's Armband. Jake Barker-Daish also comes in for his debut. Brillante, Chris Harold and Jerard Tyson also come in for United from the Coast.

The youngsters of Gold Coast looked lively early on with Ben Halloran pushing down the right wing. The 19-year-old crossed for Harold but the forward's shot was blocked by Jonatan Germano.

Heart held most of the possession in the early parts of the game and Craig Goodwin could have opened the scoring but his deflected effort as comfortably saved by Tyson.

In the space of two minutes Heart had two chances. First with Goodwin's volley but Zac Anderson unknowingly blocked the young fullback's effort.

Next Germano rose inside the box but Tyson again saved easily from the Argentine.

Heart's flurry of chances continued with Golgol Mebrahtu and Kristian Rees both getting confused with a long ball and both missed the header. The ball then fell for Fred whose volley was appalling.

With five minutes before the break Williams went agonisingly close when he cut from the left and shot but his effort was deflected wide.

In the first minutes of the second stanza Harold crossed a great ball which Halloran missed but as the ball fell for Mebrahtu the Eritrean born winger missed his effort.



Heart's Craig Goodwin wins the heading contest over Gold Coast's Ben Halloran. Photo: TIM SIZE

Halloran cut in from the right and tested Clint Bolton but the 'keeper, in his 50th Heart game denied the winger.

On 56 minutes Babalj came on for Alex Terra and only one minute later the Bosnian born forward had a great chance however Babalj's left foot effort was saved at the ground by Tyson.

Fred almost scored an accidental goal on 64 minutes as his cross-come-shot lobbed Tyson but the young 'keeper tipped over.

One minute later Adama Traore kept it scoreless with a goal-line clearing header after Simon Colosimo's header

was destined for goal.

Babalj was looking very dangerous and on 77 minutes he touched, turned and shot at Tyson's goal but the attempt just missed the upright.

Two minutes later Brillante gave the ball to Williams who passed to Fred. The Brazilian crossed to the back post where Matt Thompson touched for Babalj to tap home and open the scoring. Heart managed to hold on for the win with Gold Coast really failing to test Bolton during the 90 minutes.

Melbourne Heart coach John van 't Schip was delighted to get the three

points that was needed. "Well I think the three points of course; everybody knows is the most important in these last few games. It's about collecting points and coming from that eight games not winning then of course that is the first thing everybody is happy about. The performance I think was not that bad at all seeing the attention that was on this game and that we had to deal with that knowing that everybody expected us to win with Gold Coast having a few younger players in the team."

Gold Coast United Assistant Coach Mike Mulvey who was in for the sus-

pended Miron Bleiberg thought his side put in a respectable performance.

"It was a respectable performance. We came here with the hope of putting on a good performance and I think we are leaving with a lot. We have got some performances out of players that will have done them some good stead for the future."

"In the end of the day we lost the game trying to play football the right way."

"We gave a good account for ourselves and we will take away a lot from this game," Mulvey told the media.



Man of the moment Eli Babalj scores ten minutes from time and ends Heart's eight match winless run. Photo: ANITA MILAS



Kristian Rees puts his neck out for the Gold Coast cause. Photo: DANIEL FLIS

BE A PART OF MELBOURNE'S HEART





CC Mariners



2



Wellington Phoenix



0

Match Details

Central Coast Mariners 2 (Rogic 52', Zwaanswijk 83')
Wellington Phoenix 0
Referee: Strebre Delovski
Crowd: 7,845 At Bluetongue Stadium, Gosford

Central Coast Mariners: 20. Justin Pasfield (Gk), 3. Joshua Rose, 4. Pedj Bojic, 6. Patrick Zwaanswijk, 7. John Hutchinson, 8. Rostyn Griffiths, 14. Michael McGlinchey, 17. Tomas Rogic (2. Daniel Mcbreen 76'), 18. Alex Wilkinson (C), 19. John Sutton (12. Troy Hearfield 89'), 23. Adam Kwasnik (9. Bernie Ibini 61')

Subs Not Used: 31. Brody Crane (Gk)
Yellow Cards: Sutton 8', Kwasnik 57'
Red Cards: None

Wellington Phoenix: Mark Paston (Gk), 2. Emmanuel Muscat, 3. Tony Lochhead (19. James Downey 85'), 4. Brent Griffiths, 7. Leo Bertos, 8. Paul Ifill, 9. Chris Greenacre (12. Nicholas Ward 71'), 17. Vince Lia, 18. Ben Sigmund (C), 21. Daniel Sanchez (11. Daniel Cortes 65'), 24. Alexander Smith

Subs Not Used: 20. Anthony Warner (Gk)
Yellow Cards: Muscat 88'
Red Cards: None

Mariners return to winning ways

By Adrian Deans

My question for the Mariners going into this game was: is all the good work about to come undone?

Graham Arnold has done a fantastic job with the Mariners – brought in some players – brought up some players – and established a system which all the players understand and believe in. They're very hard to beat and they have numerous avenues to goal.

Usually.
Ever since Matt Simon left for pastures Korean the scoring has been spasmodic to say the most. For that reason, the fans were champing at the bit to see how loan signing John Sutton (brother of Chris) might fare – an English centre-forward with a game similar to Matt Simon's (so we were told).

After two losses (and with their Olyroos still overseas), the Mariners desperately needed to get back on track because a third loss would have had Brisbane within one win of re-taking top spot, and that proximity to the chasing pack can bring on the death wobbles. But if you're desperate for a win, the last team you'd want to play are the kiwis – themselves smarting from a loss at home after a great run that took them into second spot.

The home crowd's concerns, however, were eased by a dynamic performance in the first half. In fact, the Mariners should have taken the lead in the second minute. Young sensation Tomas Rogic battled his way into the box then teed up McGlinchey for a tap in – McGlinchey had the entire goal to shoot at but somehow hit the ball straight at Mark Paston.

Then we saw a succession of decisions from Strebre Delovski that got him offside with the fans – in particular the foul on Josh Rose that went unpunished but was immediately followed by a yellow card to John Sutton for a late tackle. But before the fans had finished fuming, there was an explosion of goalmouth action in the 10th minute as Wellington scrambled to block shots from Sutton, Rogic, Kwasnik and Sutton again in a matter of seconds



The Mariners rejoice after Tomas Rogic hits his second goal in consecutive games. Photo: KAREN DOUGLAS

– breathless stuff.
But for all their chances, the Mariners were still vulnerable to the sucker punch and on 22 minutes, Chris Greenacre's superb dipping volley went just over the bar. Of course, the Mariners once again went straight back to the other end to create a chance for Adam Kwasnik, who was elbowed in the jaw by Vince Lia as his superb shot was well saved by Paston. The crowd saw the elbow (in the box) even if Delovski did not.
Paston then made his best save of the half after a Mariners corner bounced off two Wellington players and was deflected goal-wards.

It was a great first half for the Mariners, despite the lack of goals. John Sutton came increasingly into the game but the performances of Bojic, McGlinchey and Rogic were the most eye-catching – Rogic moved with all the grace of a gazelle (but shot like one also).
That was to change very early in the second half when he controlled a loose ball 25 metres out and curled into the top left corner as Paston could only stand and watch. Holger Osieck up in the stand would certainly have been marking his name down for the future (and if he keeps improving at his present rate, that future may be surprisingly soon).

After being so dominant and finally going ahead, the Mariners then strangely sat back and allowed Wellington back into the game. Pasfield was required to make an excellent save in the 58th minute when he flew to his left to keep out Greenacre's point blank header.
Pasfield has looked a little at sea in his previous performances, but goalkeeping, more than any other position needs time on the park to build confidence. He did very well in this game and will not be looking forward to returning to the bench when Mat Ryan gets back.
The game was put out of Wellington's reach in the 82nd minute when

McGlinchey's free kick was headed home by Patrick Zwaanswijk. Two nil did not quite reflect the Mariners' excellent performance.
As for Sutton, he was excellent with his back to goal, bringing others into play and got a standing ovation when replaced late – he definitely looks like the missing piece in the jigsaw. The Mariners are back on track and when the Olyroos return, Arnold will have one hell of a headache trying to fit 18 good players into 11 spots.

Match Stats		
5	Saves	8
11	Attempts on target	5
9	Attempts off target	2
59%	Possession	41%
6	Corners	4
3	Offsides	6
8	Fouls committed	10



Patrick Zwaanswijk (obscured by the post) heads home powerfully. Photo: KAREN DOUGLAS



Mariner's new Scottish import John Sutton leaves a trio of Nix players in his wake. Photo: KAREN DOUGLAS

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Brisbane Roar



3

Melbourne Victory



2

Match Details

Brisbane Roar 3 (Besart Berisha 1' 32', Henrique (Pen) 38')
Melbourne Victory 2 (Harry Kewell 8', 50')
Venue: Suncorp Stadium
Referee: Jarrod Gillett
Crowd: 18, 523

Brisbane Roar: 1. Michael Theoklitos (Gk), 2. Matt Smith (C), 3. Shane Stefanutto, 5. Ivan Franjic, 6. Erik Paartalu, 7. Besart Berisha, 8. Massimo Muroccca, 10. Henrique (11. Issey Nakajima-Farran 75'), 16. Mohamed Adnan, 17. Mitch Nichols, 22. Thomas Broich (24. Nick Fitzgerald 50')

Substitutes Not Used: 12. Matt MUndy, 20. Andrew Redmayne (Gk)
Yellow Cards: Nil
Red Cards: Nil

Melbourne Victory: 3. Fabio, 4. Petar Franjic, 5. Mark Milligan, 9. Jean Carlos Solorzano (10. Archie Thompson 45'), 11. Marco Rojas, 16. Carlos Hernandez, 17. Jimmy Jeggo, 21. Ante Covic (Gk), 22. Harry Kewell (18. Danny Allsopp 75'), 23. Adrian Leijer (C), 24. Ubay Luzardo

Substitutes Not Used: 1. Tando Velaphi (Gk), 6. Leigh Broxham

Yellow Cards: Adrian Leijer 10', Ante Covic 37', Mark Milligan 69', Petar Franjic 71'
Red Cards: Nil

BRISBANE WIN SUNCORP SHOOTOUT

By Jarrod Ellis

Harry Kewell scored twice but it wasn't to be Melbourne Victory's night as Brisbane Roar claimed a 3-2 victory at Suncorp Stadium.

What was to be a pulsating match began in dramatic fashion when Brisbane striker Besart Berisha opened the scoring a mere 43 seconds after kick-off.

Many fans were still to take their seats when the Albanian seized on some poor defending to twist and turn his way through four Melbourne defenders on the edge of the area before squeezing a shot past Ante Covic.

There was a touch of good fortune to the goal but that's something that all strikers need and Brisbane and their fans will be hoping that Berisha's luck remains after he signed a two-year contract during the week.

The home team may have gotten off to a flying start but they were quickly hauled in by the Victory. Only seven minutes later Marco Rojas collected a careless Erik Paartalu pass before finding Kewell who unleashed a clinical shot that beat Michael Theoklitos at his near post.

Both goalkeepers were hard at work and Covic's effort on the quarter hour mark was especially impressive, diving right to divert a stinging long-range shot from Brisbane's Erik Paartalu to keep the ledger level.

Victory strike man Jean Carlos Solorzano, a member of the Roar's Hyundai A-League championship-winning squad last season, almost found a goal against his former employers ten minutes later but his tap-in from a Carlos Hernandez shot was from a clearly offside position.

Brisbane had been seeking out space down the right wing throughout the game and those efforts were finally rewarded in the 32nd minute as Thomas Broich, Henrique and Berisha combined to regain the lead for the Roar.

Broich created the opportunity by playing an eye-of-the-needle slide pass down the wing that found a sprinting Henrique, the diminutive Brazilian then crossed into the area, the ball landing at the feet of



Match Stats		
3	Saves	6
9	Attempts on target	6
7	Attempts off target	5
59%	Possession	41%
7	Corners	4
2	Offsides	4
8	Fouls committed	10

Besart Berisha scores a brace and gets his goalden touch back. Photo: ADRIAN GAGLIONE

Berisha who tucked away his 15th goal of the season.

Victory looked shell shocked and only six minutes later it was 3-1. Ubay Luzardo was the man at fault for the visitors, the Spanish defender bringing down Paartalu in the box with an outstretched leg. Henrique took the penalty and he had no problems converting from the spot.

Even as Brisbane regained control of the match it was clear that there was goals in the goal as the action shifted from end to end.

Roar coach Ange Postecoglou let his players know what he thought of their play at the half-time break, likening the end-to-end action to a basketball game and urging his team to retain possession

and play it out from the back.

That commitment to possession football has gotten Brisbane into trouble in the past and it did so once again early into the second half when Harry Kewell seized on a stray pass as the Roar attempted to play out from the back.

The 33 year-old showed that he's still got of plenty speed in his legs as a surge of pace left Mohammed Adnan in his wake before he unleashed a clinical strike that had Victory back to within a goal.

The goal proved to be a boost for the Melbourne side who rallied going forward and twice inside a minute had a chance to equalise, first through an inches-wide Kewell strike and then a thunderous volley from Hernandez that rocketed off the

crossbar.

Victory continued to push for an equaliser and would not have been undeserving of one but it was to no avail as Roar held on for a hard-fought win.

Aside from the three points Brisbane also celebrated two personal milestones at the club.

Massimo Muroccca broke the record for most appearances by a Roar player (132) with his 90 minute performance, overtaking former skipper Matt McKay's tally, while Berisha now holds the record for most goals scored by a Brisbane player in one season (15) with his two goal haul.

After the match Brisbane's Ange Postecoglou was far from thrilled with his

team's performance.

"Maybe I'm just a grumpy old bastard and never satisfied," Postecoglou said.

"We've got a bit of momentum, which is good. I just want us to play our game.

"We didn't look comfortable in possession all night. We gave the ball away in silly areas again and got punished."

"I thought it was a good start in terms of that we scored but it wasn't a good start in our play, I thought in our first 25 minutes we were pretty sloppy and didn't dictate the game."

"The Victory came here to have a go at us and we didn't really cope with it too well. I thought Harry was very good for them, with their attacking threats they are always dangerous."



Victory's Harry Kewell is hitting a rich vein of form and pushed the champs all the way. Photo: ADRIAN GAGLIONE



Carlos Hernandez skips a sliding tackle from Besart Berisha. Photo: ADRIAN GAGLIONE

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Perth Glory



2

Newcastle Jets



0

Match Details

Perth Glory 2 (Hughes 16, Mehmet 59)

Newcastle Jets 0

Crowd: 8,108 at nib Stadium

Perth Glory: 1. D.Vukovic, 3. B. Van Den Brink, 4.B.Mehmet (27. Andrezinho 81'), 5.S.Pantelidis, 7.J.Burns, 10. L.Miller (8.A.Highes 12'), 13.T.Dodd, 14. S.McGarry, 19.J.Risdon, 21.M.Sterjovski, 35.D.Heffernan (17.T.Howarth 67').

Yellow Cards:Heffernan.

Red Cards: Nil

Newcastle Jets: 1.B.Kennedy, 2.T.Regan (22.A.Abbas 44'), 4.N.Topor-Stanley, 5. T.Calvano, 8.J.Brockie (9.MBridges 60'), 10.R.Zadkovich, 11.T.Elrch (26.C.Chapman 79'), 13.S.Byun, 23.R.Griffiths, 24.F.Jeffers, 25.J.Pepper.

Yellow Cards: Griffiths, Pepper.

Red Cards:Nil.

Glory has first finals series in sight

By Gareth Morgan

Two exquisite headed goals from Billy Mehmet and Adam Hughes powered Glory back into the winners' circle on Saturday night as they comfortably downed finals rivals Newcastle Jets 2-0 at nib Stadium in a stunning display.

It was a third successive home win for the men in purple which moved them up to third place on the ladder and to within touching distance of a first ever home A-League final.

Even the loss of midfield playmaker Liam Miller in the 12th minute to hamstring soreness failed to faze the rampant home side, with the Irishman's replacement Hughes making an immediate impact by scoring the game's opening goal.

And the victory was all the more impressive given that the visitors had travelled west on the back of three consecutive wins and boasted a strike duo in Ryan Griffiths and Jeremy Brockie who had bagged an impressive seventeen goals between them coming into the game. In keeping with the adventurous approach coach Gary van Egmond has favoured since returning to the club, the Jets fielded three up front, with Tarek Elrich joining the prolific Griffiths and Brockie.

The dangerous Francis Jeffers lurked just behind the front three, meanwhile, but with Jacob Burns carefully shadowing the former England international and Glory's back-four standing firm, the Jets rarely managed to threaten Danny Vukovic's goal in the opening stanza.

Indeed, so comfortable in his defensive duties was Josh Risdon that he found plenty of opportunities to surge forward and he played a key role in Glory's deserved opener which arrived on 16 minutes.

The highly-rated right-back surged down the flank, before turning inside to deliver a teasing left-foot cross which substitute Hughes needed no second invitation to head firmly past stranded Jets' goalkeeper Ben Kennedy from twelve metres out. That opening goal seemed to take the wind out of the visitors' sails and it was the home side who cranked up the pressure for the rest of the first-half.

With the Jets defence creaking, the second goal seemed inevitable and it would



Match Stats		
0	Saves	2
7	Attempts on target	0
5	Attempts off target	9
43%	Possession	57%
5	Corners	3
7	Offsides	1
20	Fouls committed	10

Supersub! Adam Hughes scores for Glory after replacing the injured Liam Miller. Photo: EDUARDO MORGAN

have arrived on 35 minutes had it not been for some superb goalkeeping and a major dose of bad luck.

Firstly Kennedy produced a stunning one-handed save to tip Hughes' 25 metre screamer onto the bar and when Steven McGarry responded quickest to hook the rebound goalward, the bar again intervened to deny the Scot what would have been his third goal in four games. As half-time approached it was Dodd's turn to threaten the Newcastle goal, but his stinging low drive flashed centimetres wide of Kennedy's right post. Having seen fellow-midfielders McGarry,

Dodd and Hughes try their luck in the first-half, Mile Sterjovski decided to get in on the act early in the second, coming agonisingly close to doubling Glory's advantage with a rasping 25-metre shot from a short free-kick that grazed the bar on its way over.

And Glory's ongoing affair with the woodwork continued moments later as Hughes weaved his way across the top of the box and thundered a superb shot that beat Kennedy all ends up only to canon back off the post.

Any thoughts that Ian Ferguson's side might be punished for failing to put their

chances away all but evaporated just short of the hour mark, however, as the second goal finally arrived.

Burns capped a scintillating midfield display by curling in a superb cross from the right and Mehmet rose highest to power a classic centre-forward's header into the top corner of the net.

The tenacious Griffiths did fire one shot across the bows moments later, but Vukovic was untroubled and normal service was swiftly restored as Dodd twice went close at the other end, the second of his chances teed up by Andrezinho who was handed a late cameo off the bench.

The lively Brazilian then carved out another decent opportunity as the final whistle approached, taking advantage of a tiring Jets' defence to race down the left and whip in a deep cross which Sterjovski mis-hit wide of the target.

Glory toyed with their opponents in stoppage time, playing passing triangles to the delight of The Shed and comfortably nailing down a win which sets up an absolute blockbuster against reigning champions Brisbane Roar at nib Stadium next Saturday.



Perth Glory's Travis Dodd keeps close control as Newcastle Jets Sung-Hwan Byun zeros in. Photo: EDUARDO MORGAN



Newcastle's Taylor Regan and Adam Hughes tussle for control of the ball. Photo: EDUARD MORGAN

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Adelaide United



1

Sydney FC



2

Match Details

Adelaide United FC 1 (Barbiero 56')
Sydney FC 2 (Chianese 45+1',
Mallia 81')
Referee: Kris Griffiths-Jones
Crowd: 8,259 @ Hindmarsh Stadium

Adelaide United line-up:

1.Eugene Galekovic (gk) (c),
2.Osama Malik, 3.Nigel Boogaard,
6.Cassio, 8.Evgeniy Levchenko,
9.Sergio van Dijk, 10.Dario Vidosis,
14.Cameron Watson (11.Bruce Djite
86'), 17.Iain Ramsay, 18.Fabian
Barbiero (7.Zenon Caravella 71'),
21.Francisco Usucar

Substitutes not used: 15.Jacob Mel-
ling, 38.John Hall (gk)
Yellow Cards: Cassio 53'
Red Cards: Nil

Sydney FC line-up: 20.Ivan
Necevski (gk), 4.Pascal Bosschaart,
5.Michael Beauchamp, 6.Hirofumi
Moriyasu (12.Shannon Cole 75'),
7.Brett Emerton (3.Jamie Coyne
90+2'), 9.Bruno Cazarine, 10.Nick
Carle, 15.Terry McFlynn (c), 16.Joel
Chianese (24.Mitch Mallia 78'),
21.Scott Jamieson, 23.Rhyan Grant

Substitutes not used: 1.Liam Reddy
(gk)
Yellow Cards: Cole 85'
Red Cards: Nil

Sky Blues pinch points in smash and grab

By Nic Kerber

Adelaide United FC has been left to wonder how it came away empty handed after a 2-1 loss to Sydney FC tonight at Hindmarsh Stadium.

Again it was a classic case of making opportunities count and again it was the Reds who received the lesson rather than giving it. Two clinical Sydney strikes were enough to condemn the Reds to a ninth loss of the season, however the result could have been much different.

In what Coach John Kosmina described as worse than a bank robbery, the Reds could not buy a trick as they did everything but finish in front at the final whistle as their frustrations of not being able to capitalise in front of goal continued.

But while in previous weeks it may have partly been due to lack of quality finishing, tonight it was down to the standout performance of Sydney FC keeper Ivan Necevski, who time and again denied the Reds.

Fabian Barbiero drew the Reds level in the 56th minute after Joel Chianese had put the Sky Blues in front of the stroke of half time, but despite a superb second half performance in which they created chance after chance, United were dealt a cruel blow when Sydney substitute Mitch Mallia struck the winner in the 81st minute.

The result leaves the Reds seven points outside the top six, and while it has made achieving a finals berth that bit tougher, with five games to go and 15 points still up for grabs, Kosmina is by no means throwing in the towel.

"If you let it get on top of you what's the point of even playing and trying...so no, we're going to have a go next week, there are still five games left, 15 points available, so there's no reason we can't if we play like that," Kosmina said.

"You don't ever pack it in, ever."

After a cagey first half in a game vital to both teams' finals aspirations, the Sky Blues went ahead on the stroke of half time through Joel Chianese before Fabian

Backing up after Thursday's win over Persipura in the ACL Play-Off, Kosmina opted to change his formation for the clash, bolstering the midfield by promoting midfielder Francisco Usucar to the starting eleven at



Sydney FC find themselves ahead after an exquisite finish by Joel Chianese. Photo: ADAM BUTLER

the expense of striker Bruce Djite. The Uruguayan made the most of his recall, doing a fine job blanketing Sydney marquee man Brett Emerton.

Cassio won the Reds a corner inside the first minute and Nigel Boogaard went close to giving United the opening goal, Necevski needing his best reflexes to prevent the ball from crossing the goal line.

Sydney's first serious chance came in the 29th minute when a well worked build up ended with Nicky Carle firing a shot across Eugene Galekovic and just wide of the post.

Cassio tried his luck from long range on 35 minutes but the Brazilian could not break the deadlock in a tense if less than exhilarating opening half. But just when it seemed the Reds would go into the break on level terms, a swinging volley from Chianese after a Sydney corner gave the visitors the lead.

A Nicky Carle missile from the edge of the

area forced a sharp save from Galekovic shortly after the interval but from there it was all United as they drew level when Sergio van Dijk headed the ball on from a corner and Barbiero was alert as he turned it into the back of the net.

The goal ignited sustained pressure by the Reds but they could not make it count. Barbiero shot straight at Necevski after the Reds had broke clear and created a three on one, the midfielder deciding to go himself despite having van Dijk and Dario Vidosis either side of him.

In the 63rd minute Vidosis unselfishly squared a ball up for van Dijk, the striker's initial shot saved by Necevski, before his follow up from the rebound rolled into the post.

Vidosis was enjoying a purple patch and a brilliant solo run opened up another chance for the Reds' number 10 but again Necevski came to Sydney's rescue.

Necevski was becoming a thorn in the

Reds' side as he produced another reflex save to keep out Zenon Caravella's clever flick on before Sydney made the most of Necevski's heroics with a killer sucker punch as Mallia latched on to a long ball and slid his pinpoint shot past the outstretched leg of Galekovic.

Cassio curled a free kick inches wide of the mark as the Reds continued to surge forward, Kosmina sensing the desperation as he brought Djite on for Watson with five minutes remaining.

The Reds continued to blaze away in hope of a dramatic late equaliser but their efforts were to no avail.

"(Sydney FC Football Director) Gary Cole said it was bank robbery and it was probably worse than that to be honest, it makes the great train robbery look like a kids Christmas party. What do you do...I thought the second half was unbelievable," Kosmina said in his post match assessment.

"I thought for first 20 minutes in the first half we did everything right and then we dropped off the pace a little bit. But then you take into account that we had a game on Thursday and it was a tough one to get through...there was a bit of emotional pressure, a bit of mental pressure and to back up like we did today was fantastic."

"You make your own luck so maybe we've got a little bit in the bank at the moment and some of the luck might change and fall our way in the next few weeks."

"You can't complain about the performance. The performance in the second half was unbelievable."

"Finishing was better this week but we can't buy a goal at the moment and sometimes you have to just keep working through it and that's what we'll have to do."

The Reds next face a tough trip away to face the Newcastle Jets on Friday night at Hunter Stadium.



With his back to goal, Reds' Fabian Barbiero turns the ball into the net to put the home side back on level terms. Photo: ADAM BUTLER



Match Stats		
1	Saves	6
7	Attempts on target	3
8	Attempts off target	7
48%	Possession	52%
7	Corners	3
2	Offsides	1
9	Fouls committed	13

SFC's Mitch Mallia makes Adelaide United pay a heavy price with a sucker punch strike at the death. Photo: ADAM BUTLER

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Gold Coast United

3

CC Mariners

3

Match Details

GOLD COAST UNITED 3 (Harold 10', Halloran 17', Cooper 56')

CENTRAL COAST MARINERS 3 (Kwasnik 4'/66', Ibini 59')

Referee: Matt Gillett

Hyundai A-League Week 17 (rescheduled fixture)

At Skilled Park, Gold Coast

Gold Coast United: 20.Jerrad Tyson [gk], 2.Josh Brillante, 3.Michael Thwaite (c), 4.Zac Anderson, 5.Kristian Rees, 7.Golgol Mebrahtu (16.Maceo Rigters 64'), 14.Ben Halloran, 15.Adama Traore, 17.Chris Harold (21.Daniel Severino 90+1'), 28.Daniel Bowles, 33.Mitch Cooper (11. Jake Barker-Daish 69').

Unused subs: 40.Chris O'Connor [gk]. Yellow cards: Thwaite 81', Rigters 83'. Red cards: None.

Central Coast Mariners: 20.Justin Pasfield [gk], 3.Josh Rose, 4.Pedj Bojic, 6. Patrick Zwaanswijk, 8.Rostyn Griffiths, 10.Adriano Pellegrino (12.Troy Hearfield 75'), 14.Michael McGlinchey, 17.Tomas Rogic, 18.Alex Wilkinson (c), 19.John Sutton (9.Bernie Ibini 55'), 23.Adam Kwasnik.

Unused subs: 31.Brody Crane [gk], 16.Trent Sainsbury.

Yellow cards: Griffiths 28', Rose 45+1', Bojic 76'. Red cards: None.

Spirited Gold Coast hold league leaders

By Neil Favager

GOLD Coast United's youngsters produced a result few would have predicted by holding ladder leaders Central Coast Mariners to a 3-3 draw at Skilled Park.

It was no less that United deserved after another spirited display that almost delivered one of the shock results of the season so far.

Gold Coast led 3-1 early in the second half and looked good value for their advantage until the table toppers fought back to restore parity ten minutes later.

But the signs were good for Gold Coast who played with energy, pace and no shortage of bravery as they took the game to the Hyundai A-League's top side in what was a highly entertaining encounter.

At the back Zac Anderson looks to be growing in stature and in the middle of the park Mitch Cooper and Josh Brillante looked more like seasoned pro's than the teenagers they are.

The match didn't start too well for United though with the visitors off the mark early thanks to an Adam Kwasnik goal in just the fourth minute. Thomas Rogic's run down the left and cross into the box looked harmless enough, but a deflection off Zac Anderson laid the chance on a plate for Kwasnik, who reacted quickly to clip the ball past Jerrad Tyson.

United responded well however and almost immediately Kristian Rees steered a header just over after a great delivery into the box from Golgol Mebrahtu.

The lively Mebrahtu was enjoying a bright start to the match and was instrumental in Gold Coast's 10th minute equaliser. A burst of pace took him into the Mariners' box and when Rostyn Griffiths felled the United man referee Matt Gillett had no hesitation in pointing



	Match Stats	
4	Saves	4
6	Attempts on target	7
5	Attempts off target	6
49%	Possession	51%
2	Corners	4
2	Offsides	1
7	Fouls committed	12

After a tumultuous week the Gold Coast finally find something to smile about. Photo: ADRIAN GAGLIONE

to the spot. Fellow striker Chris Harold stepped up and converted comfortably to make it 1-1.

Just seven minutes later an increasingly confident Gold Coast had the lead courtesy of a superb individual effort from starlet Ben Halloran. The young forward was just too quick for the Central Coast defence as he took off on a 40-metre run, before crashing the ball past the static Justin Pasfield from just inside the box.

For the remainder of the half the Mariners' most likely route to goal looked to be through the ever-dangerous Kwas-

nik, however Jerrad Tyson was equal to both of the forward's efforts from distance.

United were on fire in the opening stages of the second period and would have increased their lead had it not been for the heroics of Pasfield. The Mariners' custodian produced two flying saves to spectacularly deny goal-bound efforts from both Mebrahtu and Cooper.

But Cooper wasn't to be denied his moment in the sun and ten minutes into the half the 17-year-old netted his first Hyundai A-League goal in just his

second appearance. Turning expertly in the box, Cooper held off Trent Sainsbury before guiding the ball beyond Pasfield to make it 3-1.

If anything the Gold Coast's third goal stung the Mariners into action and they soon reduced the deficit courtesy of a thunderous drive from substitute Bernie Ibini. The Central Coast striker made space in the box for a shot and smashed the ball past the helpless Tyson.

The visitors had wind in their sails and seven minutes later they were level when Kwasnik sneaked in front

of Adama Traore and headed firmly past Tyson to register his second of the game and make it 3-3.

With three minutes remaining a brave aerial challenge by Daniel Bowles was enough to thwart Patrick Zwaanswijk, who headed inches wide when under pressure from the young Gold Coast defender.

Mike Mulvey's side now have just two days to recover before Harry Kewell and Melbourne Victory roll into town on Saturday night. Kick off is at 6.45pm.



Adam Kwasnik gets a celebratory hug from Tomas Rogic. Photo: ADRIAN GAGLIONE



Mitch Cooper (Gold Coast) and Adam Kwasnik (Mariners) are two men who made the headlines on the night. Photo: ADRIAN GAGLIONE

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Jets Line Up

- Ben Kennedy
- Taylor Regan
- Nikolai Topor-Stanley
- Tiago Calvano
- Ben Kantarovski
- Jeremy Brockie
- Michael Bridges
- Ruben Zadkovic
- Tarek Elrich
- Byun
- Labinot Haliti
- James Virgili
- Matthew Nash
- Ali Abbas
- Ryan Griffiths
- Francis Jeffers
- Jacob Pepper
- Connor Chapman.

In: Ben Kantarovski (Olyroos return), Labinot Haliti, James Virgili (promoted)

Out: Nil
Unavailable: Jobe Wheelhouse (groin 1 week)

Newcastle Jets v Adelaide United

Fri 24 Feb Ausgrid Stadium 8:00pm

By Shaun Dyas

The Newcastle Jets face Adelaide United at Hunter Stadium on Friday night knowing that for the loser, their season will be all but over.

The Jets will enter the clash after a poor effort in Perth against the Glory where they struggled to create any meaningful opportunities and gave up to equally soft goals due to poor marking.

Adelaide was beaten last week at home against Sydney, but looking just at the 2-1 reverse does not justify the events that occurred at Hindmarsh.

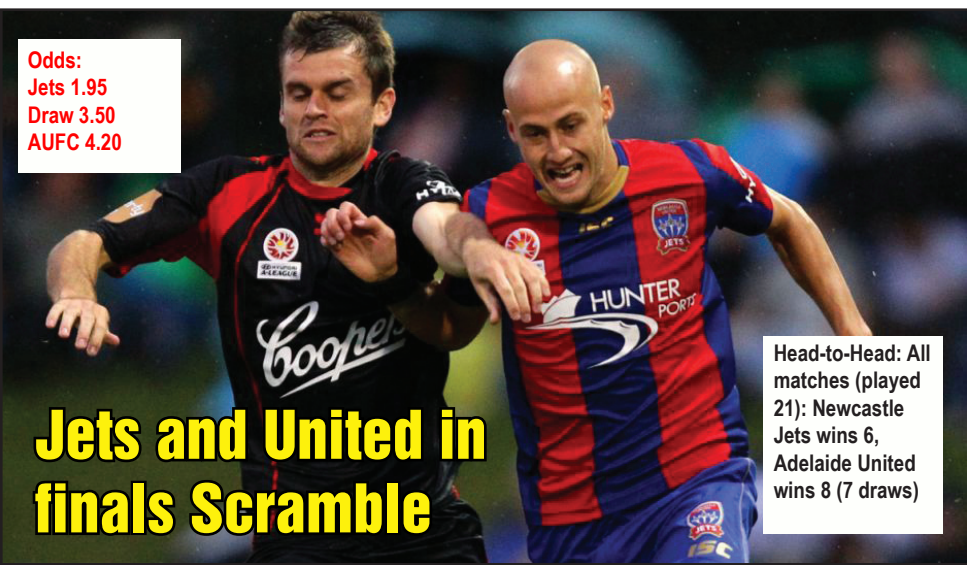
After what could only be described as a mediocre first half, Adelaide exploded into action in the second half and if it were not for Sydney keeper Ivan Necevski they would have easily won the match.

It will be interesting to see how the Reds respond to the challenge of the short back-up away to the previously in form Jets, both physically and mentally.

It can be said that there are fewer worse feelings than dominating a game and not being able to win and the Jets will be smarting after their poor performance in the West.

One of the main issues for the Jets is the fact that they are currently loosing light in the midfield engine room.

Skipper Jobe Wheelhouse has re-



Odds:
Jets 1.95
Draw 3.50
AUFC 4.20

Jets and United in finals Scramble

Head-to-Head: All matches (played 21): Newcastle Jets wins 6, Adelaide United wins 8 (7 draws)

turned to training but is little chance to feature against the Reds. This is coupled with the fact that Kasey Wehrman is still on the outer with Gary Van Egmond and is unlikely to ever play for the Jets again.

Taylor Regan deputised in midfield against the Glory but struggled before being replaced at half time due to stomach cramps.

Van Egmond is pondering the idea of rushing young Olyroos midfielder Ben Kantarovski back into the fray, even though he will only arrive back in Australia early on Friday morning. Adelaide has a number of threats who are more than capable of caus-

ing problems for the Novocastrians. Sergio Van Dijk is one of the leading strikers in the A-League and will be looking forward to getting on the end of the service that will be supplied by the likes of Cassio and Iain Ramsey. Ramsey in particular has had a breakout season and will be a constant menace with his pace and trickery, not to mention a sublime left foot.

Tarek Elrich could be the man with the job of harnessing Ramsey. In fact the Newcastle flyer has been threatening defences going the other way and this clash will be crucial in the outcome of the game.

Another player primed for a huge performance is Kiwi striker Jeremy Brockie. He always seems to lift when he plays in Newcastle and a couple of goals will help as he negotiates a new contract.

This will be a desperate and committed contest with both sides having their seasons to play for. The fact that the game is in Newcastle tips the scales in favour of the Jets and should lead them to a victory over Adelaide, albeit narrowly.

Kiss of Death
Jets 2-1 AUFC



Adelaide Utd Line Up

- Eugene Galekovic (gk) (c)
- Osama Malik
- Nigel Boogaard
- Cassio
- Zenon Caravella
- Evgeniy Levchenko
- Sergio van Dijk
- Dario Vidosic
- Bruce Djite
- Cameron Watson
- Jacob Melling
- Iain Ramsay
- Fabian Barbiero
- Francisco Usucar
- John Hall (gk)

In: Nil
Out: Nil

Unavailable: Daniel Mullen (international duty), Mark Birighitti (gk) (international duty), Antony Golec (international duty), Spase Dilevski (groin), Jon McKain (knee), Paul Izzo (gk) (knee)



Sydney FC Line Up

- Liam Reddy
- Sebastian Ryall
- Jamie Coyne
- Pascal Bosschaert
- Michael Beauchamp
- Hirofumi Moriyasu
- Brett Emerton
- Bruno Cazarine
- Nick Carle
- Shannon Cole
- Terry McFlynn
- Joel Chianese
- Juho Makela
- Ivan Necevski
- Scott Jamieson
- Rhyan Grant
- Mitch Mallia

In: Juho Makela (promoted), Sebastian Ryall (returns from injury)

Out: Karol Kisel (groin - 1 week), Mark Bridge (ankle - 1 week)

Unavailable: Dimi Petratos (Qantas Australian U23 duty)

Sydney FC v Wellington Phoenix

Sat 25 Feb SFS 5:30pm

By Mike Salter

A week is a long time in politics, and two weeks can make a lot of difference in football. Before their home game against Perth, Sydney were on the downward slide, having shipped five goals at home against the Jets and dropped out of the top six.

Two games and two 2-1 wins later, they are full of confidence heading into a home game against Ricki Herbert's troops from across the Tasman, who have suffered two losses after looking formidable for so long. The teams are only three points apart on the table, and the jostling for positions with the finals within sight should make this one a battle to savour.

Pleasingly for Vitezslav Lavicka and Sydney fans, it was the younger players who made the difference against Adelaide last weekend, with the lively Joel Chianese opening the scoring and Mitchell Mallia, whose presence in the first team is surely long overdue, securing the three points with a true striker's finish. Another positive to come out of the game at Hindmarsh was the performance of Ivan Necevski, for once getting a start ahead of Liam Reddy and excelling.



Odds:
SFC 2.10
Draw 3.40
Phoenix 3.75

Sky Blues prepare for Nix visit

Head-to-Head: All matches (played 15): Sydney FC wins 8, Wellington Phoenix wins 6 (1 draw)

Lavicka will this time be able to call on the youngsters who have returned from the Olyroos' ill-fated Asian campaign, but none of them is assured an immediate slot in the first eleven. Although Terry Antonis has been impressive in patches for the Sky Blues, the ebullient form of Chianese and Mallia may mean that the teenager will have to endure a spell on the bench. Although neither Hirofumi Moriyasu nor Brett Emerton have been in particularly good form, Lavicka will surely be

loath to tinker with a winning unit.

Although the Phoenix had their moments in their recent loss to the competition leaders, their inability to put away their chances must be a concern in the lead-up to the finals. Although the irreplaceable Paul Ifill will pose danger against Sydney's defence as he always does, the Phoenix will be weakened by the absence of inventive Brazilian winger Daniel, who has returned home following a season-ending ankle injury.

Wellington certainly have the wood on their opponents at the moment, having won the last two encounters. Both of these matches, however, were home games for the Phoenix, and their away form has always been their Achilles' heel. All in all, the signs are good for the Sky Blues...although Lavicka will, as usual, be taking nothing for granted.

Kiss of Death
SFC 2-1 Phoenix



Phoenix Line Up

- Mark Paston (GK)
- Manny Muscat
- Tony Lochhead,
- Tim Brown
- Leo Bertos
- Paul Ifill
- Chris Greenacre
- Nicky Ward
- Mirjan Pavlovic
- Vince Lia
- Ben Sigmund
- Jimmy Downey
- Tony Warner (GK)
- Dani Sanchez
- Andrew Durante (C)
- Alex Smith

two to be omitted

In: Andrew Durante (returns from suspension), Tim Brown (returns from suspension), Mirjan Pavlovic (promoted).

Out: Daniel (ankle injury - 2 - 3 weeks), Brent Griffiths (omitted).

Unavailable: Cameron Lindsay (international duty), Lucas Pan-telis (knee injury - indefinite)

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Gold Coast Line Up

- 20.Jerrad Tyson (gk)
- 2.Josh Brillante
- 3.Michael Thwaite (c)
- 4.Zac Anderson
- 5.Kristian Rees
- 7.Golgol Mebrahtu
- 11.Jake Barker-Daish
- 14.Ben Halloran
- 15.Adama Traore
- 16.Maceo Rigters
- 17.Chris Harold
- 21.Daniel Severino
- 27.Ambes Yosief
- 28.Daniel Bowles
- 31.Daniel Bragg
- 33.Mitch Cooper
- 40.Chris O'Connor (gk)
- *two to be omitted*

In: 27.Ambes Yosief (promoted), 31.Daniel Bragg (promoted).

Out: Nil.

Unavailable: 1.Glen Moss (groin injury – 4 weeks), 6.Paul Beekmans (compassionate leave - indefinite), 9.Joel Porter (calf – 3 weeks), 10.Tahj Minniecon (foot injury – 2 weeks), 12.Dylan Macallister (hamstring – 3 weeks), 13.Ante Rozic (hamstring injury – 1 week), 18.James Brown (ankle injury – 1 week), 19.Chris Broadfoot (ankle injury – indefinite), 22.Peter Jungschlager (hip injury – 1 week), 23.Dylan McGowan (international duty).

Gold Coast Utd v Melbourne Victory

Sat 25 Feb Skilled Park 7:45pm

By Jarrod Ellis

After a week of making off-field headlines Gold Coast United will take to the pitch once again on Saturday when they host Melbourne Victory. Owner outbursts, coach sackings and captaincy appointments have made for interesting new stories but United will be hoping that they can put those things behind them and focus on attempting to escape from the foot of the A-League ladder.

On Wednesday night this young Gold Coast team gave an indication of what they are capable of, holding league leaders Central Coast Mariners to a 3-3 draw. Ben Halloran, Golgol Mebrahtu and the much talked about Mitch Cooper were standouts for United and new head coach Mike Mulvey will need to coax similar performances from them come Saturday night. Young teams often suffer from inconsistency and Mulvey will need to ensure that his side are ready to face a Melbourne Victory squad possessing plenty of experience. Victory haven't suffered from the off-field distractions that have plagued Gold Coast of late but they have their own pressures to overcome as they chase a place in the top six.

The weekend's results, which saw Victory lose 3-2 to Brisbane and three of the four sides above them win, mean Melbourne face a tough ask to claw back into contention as they are



Odds:
GCUFC 4.25
Draw 3.45
Victory 1.86

Young guns to take on big guns

Head-to-Head: All matches (played 9): Gold Coast United wins 3, Melbourne Victory wins 5 (1 draw)

five points behind Sydney FC in sixth place. Melbourne have had to face some of the better teams in the A-League of late but their match against Gold Coast appears a lot easier on paper. However when Archie Thompson was asked midweek about his thoughts ahead of the game he indicated he wasn't expecting an easy game. "You find that when players are up against it, they find something special," Thompson said. "We are not going to Gold Coast thinking it is going to be an easy game. They gave it to Heart last week. It's going to be difficult still, I think we are confident

we can go and get three points." Between the Gold Coast game and the subsequent clash with Newcastle, Thompson and his team-mates Harry Kewell and Mark Milligan will be part of the squad for the World Cup qualifier against Saudi Arabia at AAMI Park. Milligan and Kewell have both been key performers in recent week and should those two fire on Saturday it's hard to see the young Gold Coast squad being able to cope. Milligan was a catalyst for the Victory's revival against Brisbane last week, putting in an immense performance after halftime and since his arrival Melbourne have looked far more like a

team that belongs in the top six than it did previously. Should Victory's key men turn up tuned in and on form at Skilled Park, United will likely struggle and Melbourne should be able to return home with a valuable three points. Chitchat on social media sites suggesting the game would be a free entry match was put to rest by club CEO Clive Mensink, who scotched the rumours and affirmed that the match would be a normal Hyundai A-League fixture with regular ticket prices applying.

Kiss of Death
GCUFC 2-3 Victory



Victory Line Up

- 1. Tando Velaphi (gk)
- 2. Matthew Foschini
- 3. Fabio
- 4. Petar Franjic
- 5. Mark Milligan
- 6. Leigh Broxham
- 7. Matthew Kemp
- 9. Jean Carlos Solorzano
- 10. Archie Thompson
- 11. Marco Rojas
- 13. Diogo Ferreira
- 14. Billy Celeski
- 16. Carlos Hernandez
- 17. Jimmy Jeggo
- 18. Danny Allsopp
- 19. Isaka Cernak
- 21. Ante Covic (GK)
- 22. Harry Kewell
- 23. Adrian Leijer (c)
- 24. Ubay Luzardo
- *five to be omitted*

In: 7. Matthew Kemp, 14. Billy Celeski (both returning from injury), 13. Diogo Ferreira (returns from Qantas Australian U23 duty), 2. Matthew Foschini (returns from Qantas Australian U23 duty), 19. Isaka Cernak (returns from Qantas Australian U23 duty)

Out: Nil
Unavailable: 8. Grant Brebner (injured).



Glory Line Up

- 1.Danny Vukovic (Gk)
- 2.Josh Mitchell
- 3.Bas Van Den Brink
- 4.Billy Mehmet
- 5.Steve Pantelidis
- 7.Jacob Burns (C)
- 8.Adam Hughes
- 9.Shane Smeltz
- 10.Liam Miller
- 13.Travis Dodd
- 14.Steven McGarry
- 15.Tommy Amphlett
- 17.Todd Howarth
- 19. Josh Risdon
- 20. Neil Young
- 21.Mile Sterjovski
- 27.Andrezinho
- 35. Dean Heffernan
- *three to be omitted*

In: 2.Josh Mitchell (Returns From Injury), 9.Shane Smeltz (Returns From Injury) 15.Tommy Amphlett (Promoted)

Out: Nil

Unavailable: 6.Chris Coyne (Achilles), 11.Victor Sikora (Hip – Long Term Injury List), 16.Evan Berger (Hamstring)

Perth Glory v Brisbane Roar

Sat 25 Feb nib Stadium 10:00pm

By John Clark

Two of the form teams of the competition meet this weekend at NIB Stadium, a win either way may prove decisive in the final jostling for positions on the A-League table.

The Glory host Brisbane having only lost one of their past ten matches and scooting up to third on the table. It is hard to believe that less than three months ago rumours were rife that Ian Ferguson could soon find himself out of a job. He has instead been the architect of a resurgent Glory side that is still a realistic chance to jump up to second on the table.

Standing in their way is a recently woken giant that seems to be hitting their straps come the pointy end of the season. As it stands the Roar sit four points clear of the Glory with 5 matches remaining, a win here would make that gap almost insurmountable for Ian Fergusons side to chase down.

The Roar may also have one eye on the premiership plate, as the Mariners stutter out front. Last week the Roar turned on an eye catching first half display to take all 3 points from the Melbourne Victory.

The Roar took the lead in the first minute, through some calamitous Victory defending and the deadly finishing of star striker Besart Berisha.



Head-to-Head: All matches (played 20): Perth Glory wins 3, Brisbane Roar wins 12 (5 draws)

Match of the round heads West

Odds:
Glory 2.75
Draw 3.40
Roar 2.55

It was to be a short lived advantage though as Marco Rojas burst down the right to tee up Harry Kewell who duly converted. Just after the half hour mark though the Roar lead again with Berisha putting the finishing touches on some exquisite build up play and five minutes later they had a third when Lozardo's clumsy challenge felled Paartalu inside the box and Henrique converted the spot kick. The Victory did fight back in the second half and gained a lifeline through another Harry Kewell goal. But it was always destined to be Brisbane's night, despite Carlos Hernandez rattling the crossbar with

what would have been the goal of the season. Ange Postecoglou would have been slightly disappointed with his side's second half after instructing his charges to keep possession and not let the game become a 'basketball' match, which was the complexion the game took in the second period. The Glory was clinical in their disposal of Newcastle, with headed goals from Billy Mehmet and Adam Hughes handing the Glory all three points. It meant that the Glory hadn't been beaten at home since before Christmas, a stretch that also included a 3-3 draw with this week's opponent. It is

hard to say who would've been happier with the point with the Roar battling back from 2-0 down to take the lead before Mile Sterjovski equalised from the spot. It was certainly a far cry from the performance Perth delivered in round 8 when they were carved up by the Roar to make it 36 games unbeaten. On paper the Roar are the better team here, but with a 5 hour flight and concerns of the fitness of Thomas Broich, I think the Glory might just edge it here.

Kiss of Death
Glory 2-1 Roar



Roar Line Up

- 1. Michael Theoklitos (GK)
- 2. Matt Smith (C)
- 3. Shane Stefanutto
- 5. Ivan Franjic
- 6. Erik Paaratlu
- 7. Besart Berisha
- 8. Massimo Muroccca
- 10. Henrique
- 11. Issey Nakajima-Farran
- 12. Matt Mundy
- 16. Mohamed Adnan
- 17. Mitch Nichols
- 19. Jack Hingert
- 20. Andrew Redmayne (GK)
- 21. James Meyer
- 22. Thomas Broich
- 24. Nick Fitzgerald
- *two to be omitted*

In: Nil

Out: Nil

Unavailable: 14. Rocky Visconte (Qantas Australian U23 duty), 4. Matt Jurman (Qantas Australian U23 duty)

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Heart Line Up

1. Clint Bolton (Gk)
2. Michael Marrone
3. Brendan Hamill
4. Simon Colosimo
5. Fred (C)
6. Matt Thompson
7. Rutger Worm
10. Wayne Srhoj
11. Alex Terra
13. Jonatan Germano
15. David Williams
16. Aziz Behich
17. Jason Hoffman
18. Curtis Good
19. Eli Babalj
23. Mate Dugandzic
26. Paul Reid
27. Craig Goodwin
30. Sebastian Mattei (Gk)
four to be omitted

In: 16. Aziz Behich (Returns From Qantas U23's), 17. Jason Hoffman (Returns From Qantas U23's), 18. Curtis Good (Returns From Suspension), 23. Mate Dugandzic (Returns From Qantas U23's)

Out: Nil
Unavailable: Nil

Melb Heart v Central Coast Mariners

Sun 26 Feb AAMI Park 5:00pm

By Matthew Galea

Melbourne Heart will welcome table toppers Central Coast Mariners to AAMI Park on Sunday evening as they look to build on their 1-0 win over Gold Coast United last week and cement their place in their first finals series.

There is no doubting that the Melbourne Heart, at their best, are a side more than worthy of a spot in the finals. They have proven that much in a season where they have beaten just about every team in the competition. Central Coast are the exception, but in both prior matches, Heart have certainly held their own against the league leaders. Undone by some hopeless refereeing at Bluetongue Stadium in Round 8, and defeated in the dying seconds of a match they controlled from kick off in Round 17, the Heart have one last chance to beat the team who have attained what looks to be an untenable lead at the top of the league table, and the stakes, for Heart at least, are higher than ever.

Central Coast have proven too, that with Graham Arnold at the helm, complacency will not be allowed to take hold of the league leaders. Central Coast put an in-form Wellington Phoenix to the sword comfortably last weekend and John van't Schip will be under no illusions that only the Heart's very best will do if they want to take three points at AAMI Park on Sunday evening.



Heart to pump against league leaders

Wednesday night's 3-3 thriller on the Gold Coast might just have taken the edge out of Arnold's side though, and he will need to pick his side up quickly ahead of Sunday's game.

Eli Babalj came off the bench to score the all important goal last week and end his own personal goal drought, and van't Schip will hope that that moment will prove the defining one in the youngster's season as he looks to play a pivotal part of Melbourne Heart's finals charge. With only two points the difference between a debut finals appearance and another early finish to the season, the margin for error is slim

and it will be up to players like Eli Babalj to make sure that the Heart's slick football gets the finishing it deserves. Having already scored against the Mariners this season, Babalj will be hoping to do the same once more against Graham Arnold's side on Sunday. It may seem a lot of responsibility for such a young player, but with a support cast of Fred, Thompson, Worm and potentially the likes of Dugandzic and Behich, Babalj and the other forwards certainly will not be short of ammunition.

Central Coast will welcome back their own Olyroos, with Mat Ryan, Oliver Bozanic and Mustafa Amini all returning,

providing a similar boost to the Central Coast Mariners. John Hutchison is another likely name to return. With both teams desperate for a win, albeit for vastly different reasons, this has the potential to be one of the matches of the season. Central Coast need to find some consistency heading into a finals run where they might just be considered favourites, whilst Heart's participation in the play-offs are riding on another run of good results, starting on Sunday.

**Kiss of Death
Heart 2-2 Mariners**



Mariners Line Up

1. Mathew Ryan (Gk)
2. Daniel Mcbreen
3. Joshua Rose
4. Pedj Bojic
6. Patrick Zwaanswijk
7. John Hutchinson
8. Rostyn Griffiths
9. Bernie Ibini
10. Adriano Pellegrino
11. Oliver Bozanic
12. Troy Hearfield
14. Michael McGlinchey
16. Trent Sainsbury
17. Tomas Rogic
18. Alex Wilkinson (C)
19. John Sutton
20. Justin Pasfield (Gk)
22. Mustafa Amini
23. Adam Kwasnik
Four To Be Omitted

In: 1. Mathew Ryan (Gk) (Returns From International Duty), 2. Daniel Mcbreen (Promoted), 7. John Hutchinson (Returns From Illness), 11. Oliver Bozanic (Returns From International Duty), 22. Mustafa Amini (Returns From International Duty)

Out: 31. Brody Crane (Omitted)

Unavailable: Nil

Reds confirm their place in AFC Champions League

By Nic Kerber

Adelaide United FC has put to bed any uncertainty surrounding its place in the AFC Champions League 2012 after defeating Persipura Jayapura 3-0 in a Play-Off at Hindmarsh Stadium.

The Reds dominated the contest and strangely it was goals from two unlikely sources, defensive pairing Nigel Boogaard and Evgeniy Levchenko, who gave the home side a two goal cushion before Sergio van Dijk put the final nail in the coffin to ensure Adelaide United will compete in the AFC Champions League for a fourth time.

The score line could have been more one-sided if not for some misfiring on goal by the home side, particularly in the opening 45 minutes, but they did what they had to do in the cut throat encounter.

Initially, a compact Persipura tested the Reds' patience but the Indonesian team's early resistance ended in the 12th minute when Boogaard struck a well timed shot after a Dario Vidosic corner had created panic in a congested penalty area.

The floodgates threatened to open as Iain Ramsay smashed a shot into the post from an acute angle two minutes later, the Reds looking to put the game out of reach early. Persipura were being exposed at the back but despite the openings, the Reds could not add to their lead.

Only holding on to a one goal advantage, the Reds still had to be on their guard defensively and they were nearly caught out in the 29th minute, Eugene Galekovic arriving on the scene just in time as Titus Bonai played a neat give and go to almost latch onto a through ball in the penalty area, Imanuel Padwa then hitting his shot on the follow up from Galekovic's block onto the roof of the net.

Vidosic came close in the 34th minute and



Nigel Boogaard strikes home for Adelaide United
Photo: ADAM BUTLER

then Djite and van Dijk both forced a save out of Persipura keeper Yoo Jaehoon, however there were to be no more goals before half time.

The Reds came out purposefully again after the break, Djite meeting a Cameron Watson cross in the 53rd minute only for his header to be denied by a fine reflex save from Jaehoon.

Any nerves were then settled in the 57th minute when a well executed set play gave United its second. An in swinging Vidosic

corner to the near post was well headed on by Osama Malik and Levchenko was perfectly positioned on the edge of the six yard box to send a left footed volley into the back of the net.

With a two goal buffer and knowing that United must back up for a game against Sydney FC on Sunday, the Reds' coaching staff brought Djite, Ramsay and Vidosic off, Youth Team striker Evan Kostopoulos given his first official appearance for the senior team.

Van Dijk then added a third with a trademark finish from a Zenon Caravella cross in the 84th minute to emphatically confirm the Reds' place in Group E of the 2012 edition of the prestigious Asian club competition alongside Gamba Osaka, Bunyodkor and either the Pohang Steelers or Chonburi.

Luciano Trani, Adelaide United's licensed Head Coach for the ACL, was not only pleased to secure the crucial result but also to see the Reds continue to build on their winning momentum.

"In the end it was (a good performance) but in the first half we had a couple of opportunities to make some of those openings count but unfortunately we either took a wrong option or wasted a bit too much time setting up for a strike on goal," Trani said.

"This game was brought upon us so we needed to physically get ourselves up and mentally be prepared to back up after Gold Coast, and knowing this was a game that was obviously going to make us qualify for the AFC Champions League, we needed to

make sure that we won the game."

"That's two victories in a row now which we haven't done for a long time, so that will obviously hold us in good stead for Sunday's game against Sydney."

Match Details

Adelaide United FC 3 (Boogaard 12', Levchenko 57', van Dijk 84')
Persipura Jayapura 0
Referee: Toma Masaaki (Japan)
Crowd: 5,013 @ Hindmarsh Stadium

Adelaide United line-up: 1.Eugene Galekovic (gk) (c), 2.Osama Malik, 3.Nigel Boogaard, 6.Cassio, 8.Evgeniy Levchenko, 9.Sergio van Dijk, 10.Dario Vidosic (15.Jacob Melling 75'), 11.Bruce Djite (23.Evan Kostopoulos 66'), 14.Cameron Watson, 17.Iain Ramsay (7.Zenon Caravella 66'), 18.Fabian Barbiero

Substitutes not used: 13.Ricardo Da Silva, 26.Jon Mavromatis, 27.Jordan Elsey, 38.John Hall (gk)
Yellow Cards: Barbiero 67'
Red Cards: Nil

Persipura Jayapura line-up: 1.Yoo Jaehoon (gk), 4.Richardo Salampessy, 9.Beto, 12.Immanuel Padwa (10.Zah Rahan 32'), 13.Ian Kabes, 14.Moses Banggo (33.Lukas Mandowen 57'), 15.Gerald Pangkali, 21.Tinus Pae, 25.Titus Bonai, 44.Yohanis Tjoe (11.Immanuel Wanggai 79'), 45.Bio Paulin

Substitutes not used: 6.David Laly, 16.Daniel Tata, 30.Eki Sabilillah (gk), 32.Fiktor Pae
Yellow Cards: Bonai 32', Beto 39'
Red Cards: Nil

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FRED Melbourne Heart



PHOTOS/GRAPHICS: ANITA MILAS

PICS OF ROUND 22



New man at the helm: Mike Mulvey takes over the hot-seat at Gold Coast United from Miron Bleiberg. Photo: DANIEL FLIS

Brisbane Roar's mascot has plenty to roar about after a super game between the champs and Melbourne Victory. Photo: ADRIAN GAGLIONE



Les Shorrock's Action Packed Picture Page



Captain, my captain: Heart's Fred and Gold Coast's Mitch Cooper exchange pleasantries prior to their match. Photo: TIM SIZE



A young fan awaits in the player's tunnel to fly the flag for Harmony Day before the Heart v Gold Coast clash. Photo: ANITA MILAS



Red sails in the sunset for Adelaide United fans. Photo: ADAM BUTLER



Henrique scores from the spot for Roar against Victory and has a baby in the process. Photo: ADRIAN GAGLIONE



SFC's Hirofumi Moriyasu gives a new definition to a purple path. Or is that just a Scanlen's bubblegum tattoo? Photo: ADAM BUTLER



Heart fans get that winning feeling again after nearly two months of anticipation. Photo: ANITA MILAS

NYL heads into penultimate round



AIS keeper, Lucas Spinella foils Heart skipper Dusan Bosnjak's chance to score. PHOTO: JOHN PUNSHON



A delighted Dusan Bosnjak (left) is about to share a low five with Zac Walker who has just scored the first goal of his hat trick. Photo: JOHN PUNSHON

By Daniel Quinn

Zac Walker hat-trick sinks the AIS
A Zac Walker hat-trick has sunk the AIS 4-0 at John Cain Memorial Park on Saturday afternoon.

Zac Walker opened the scoring with a wonderful strike before smashing home the second and slotting the third past the keeper. Daniel Peluso also fired into the top corner in stoppage time to cap off the afternoon. Heart created the first chance on 6 minutes when Zac Walker played in captain Dusan Bosnjak whose finish was well closed down and saved by Lucas Spinella.

AIS's first chance came after they pumped up the ball and Jakob Williams got a toe onto the ball but Nikola Roganovic rushed out to clear from the edge of the box.

AIS were looking dangerous with Bright Apiah on the right wing and the young forward passed off to John Karatzas who was one-on-one with Kristian Konstantinidis but Karatzas' effort narrowly missed the target.

The best chance so far of the game came from a great ball from Scott Galloway who found Stefan Mauk. The Joey's volley was fantastically saved by Roganovic.

Joshua Barresi, a tall forward showed some great skill to beat three defenders but his shot was denied by an outstanding save by Roganovic once again.

On 39 minutes Zac Walker used his great pace to beat the defence but while one-on-one with goalkeeper Spinella the 'keeper

made a great double save before Zac Walker crossed for the other Walker, Jeremy. But his first time volley was blocked and cleared.

Seconds later Zac Walker opened the scoring for the hosts. The quick forward curled the ball into the top corner from outside the box, a truly stunning goal.

Just before the break Adrian Zahra was found one-on-one with Spinella but the keeper made an excellent save to deny the wide man.

In the opening minute of the second stanza AIS should have equalised but half-time substitute Steve Kuzmanouski fired over from point blank range.

On 58 minutes Zac Walker doubled the lead. Kamal Ibrahim did well on the left and cut the ball back to Walker who smashed the effort into the top of the net.

With six minutes left Zac Walker finished off the AIS with his third goal and his hat-trick when he slotted past substitute 'keeper Jordan Thurtell.

Nick Kalmar in his first game back from a long term back injury almost made it four. But Thurtell denied the senior player with a great save.

Zac Walker was having an outstanding game and played in substitute Daniel Peluso who finished into the top corner past Thurtell to cap off a great result for the Heart.

Roar too strong for Victory
Brisbane Roar were too strong for Melbourne Victory on Sunday afternoon at

Cleveland Showgrounds in their 2-1 defeat of the Melbourneians.

Brisbane opened the scoring on 17 minutes when James Donachie thundered the post before George Lambadaridis finished with the follow-up effort.

Tommy Ciriak became the second Roar player to hit the woodwork before Chris Bush's long effort went well wide.

Just before the break Victory winger Hernan Espindola equalised for the visitors. The Joey finished off after John Buceto's initial attempt was parried.

Five minutes into the second-half Anthony Proia's strike was cleared off the line. But on 66 minutes Roar did take the lead through a Ciriak penalty. Luke Brattan's free-kick was handled before Ciriak stepped up and gave his side the lead.

Kofi Danning, who came off the bench at half-time, could have double the lead but he decided to pass off to Ciriak instead of shooting. However Danning's pass was over hit.

Melbourne Victory coach Darren Davies was satisfied with the performance despite the defeat. "Coming back (home), it wasn't about the results, I was actually just as pleased with the way we tried to play as more so then some of the games we have actually won but we didn't play out as well as we will do in the future."

Sydney takes all three points in Adelaide thriller

A late Joe Gibbs penalty has taken all three points in Sydney's 4-3 defeat of Adelaide United at Burton Park on Saturday.

Sydney could have opened the scoring on 14 minutes but Jordan Figon and Blake Powell were denied by the Adelaide defence after 'keeper John Hall was caught out of position.

Six minutes later Powell opened the scoring after Caleb Rufer found the young forward in the box.

Seconds later Awer Mabil almost scored a spectacular scissor kick but Ryan Norval in goals denied the Kenyan born winger.

Figon made it 2-0 when his deflected effort beat Hall.

Five minutes before the break Nicholas Mavromatis finished nicely past Norval to grab a goal back for the hosts.

Three minutes into the second stanza Rufer tapped home to make it 3-1 before Jordan Elsey bundled home to make it 3-2.

A minute after Elsey's goal Even Kostopoulos thundered the crossbar but Liam Wooding did equalised for the Baby Reds on 58 minutes when he smashed it past Norval. Four minutes later Powell was denied a brace by Hall with a good save.

On 82 minutes Sydney were awarded a penalty when Elsey was give a yellow card for tripping Figon inside the box. Gibbs stepped up to steal it late on.

The Baby Reds finished the game with ten when Teeboy Kamara was given his second

yellow card in three minutes as Sydney held on.

Goalfest between the two Coasts
Table toppers Central Coast Mariners have come closer to winning the National Youth League title with a 6-3 win over Gold Coast United at Owen Park on Sunday.

The Mariners opened the scoring on 9 minutes when Nikola Stanojevic poked home after a close range scramble.

Four minutes later Ben Jurman smashed a powerful drive into the bottom corner of the net to double the lead.

On 33 minutes Dutchman Maceo Rigters grabbed one back for the hosts when he slid it past David Bradasevic.

Just seven minutes into the second-half Rigters grabbed his brace with a stunning, powerful strike to equalise for the hosts.

Midway through the half Central Coast scored a quick-fire-double. Stuart Musialik fired a wonderful free-kick into the net before Mitchell Duke's first-time effort doubled the lead.

But on 79 minutes Gold Coast brought it back to 4-3 when Kwame Yeboah's finished after the ball from a deflection.

Kwabena Appiah-Kubi made it 6-3 with two late strikes to cap off a great afternoon.

Glory steals it late
A late Tommy Amphlett strike has given Perth Glory a late 1-0 win over Newcastle

Results	
Melbourne Heart 4-0 AIS	
Adelaide United 3-4 Sydney FC	
Brisbane Roar 2-1 Melbourne Victory	
Gold Coast United 3-6 CC Mariners	
Perth Glory FC 1-0 Newcastle Jets	

NYL Standings	
	P W D L F A D P
1 CC Mariners	17 11 2 4 41 16 25 35
2 Perth Glory	16 9 5 2 34 26 8 32
3 Brisbane Roar	16 8 4 4 46 31 15 28
4 Sydney FC	16 7 3 6 39 29 10 24
5 Gold Coast United	15 7 2 6 33 30 3 23
6 Melbourne Heart	17 7 2 8 32 35 -3 23
7 Newcastle Jets	15 5 4 6 24 24 0 19
8 Adelaide United	16 4 5 7 24 32 -8 17
9 AIS	16 4 1 11 25 54 -29 13
10 Melbourne Victory	16 3 2 11 14 34 -21 11

Next Round	
Fri 25 Feb 12 4:00pm	Newcastle Jets Vs Adelaide United
	Adamstown Oval, Newcastle
Sat 26 Feb 12 11:00am	Perth Glory Vs Brisbane Roar
	6PR Stadium, Inglewood
Sat 26 Feb 12 3:00pm	Gold Coast United Vs Melbourne Victory
	Owen Park, Southport
Sat 26 Feb 12 3:30pm	Sydney FC Vs AIS
	WIN Jubilee, Kogarah

Jets at 6PR Stadium on Sunday.
On seven minutes both sides had their opening chances with Matthew Nash saving from Amphlett before Labinot Haliti fired over for the Jets.

Lewis Italiano, in goals for Glory, denied Joeys captain Connor Chapman's powerful effort on 36 minutes.

Chapman had another chances before the break when he headed wide from a corner.

With about ten minutes left skipper Sam Mitchinson crossed from the left to an unmarked Ndumba Makeche but the outstanding forward wasn't so outstanding and found the side netting.

With two minutes left Amphlett was found and slid the ball past Nash in goals.

Jets pushed Nash forward at a late corner but Brandon O'Neill as blocked while running onto an empty goal.

Pre-Season Cups

North and Corio on track for final

By Roy Hay

North Geelong and Corio will meet tonight at 6 pm in a dress rehearsal for the grand final of the City of Greater Geelong Cup at Bell Park Sports Club.

North has won all its games racking up 12 goals and conceding only one, while Corio also has a one hundred per cent record after three games and has not lost a goal.

Last Friday North thumped Surfcoast by four goals to nil, with a double by Nathan Long and one each from Fikret Husanovic and Michael Anderson.

Geelong scraped home by two goals to one against Bell Park. Steven Nikolovski put Geelong in front in 22 minutes, but seven minutes later Chris Newman brought Park level.

There were only eight minutes left when Daniel Wilson got Geelong's winner.

On Sunday in the early game Surfcoast and Geelong Rangers played out a scoreless draw.

Billy Bunce came closest for Surfcoast in the first half, shooting wide after a good run down the middle, while Stuart Begg connected well with a corner kick won by Darren McCallum for Rangers, but the defender's effort finished up on the roof of the net.

The second half remained very even, with James Blackburn's goalbound ef-



Surfcoast versus Geelong Rangers (in dark blue) in the City of Greater Geelong Cup. Photo: Roy Hay.

fort for Rangers being diverted for a fruitless corner kick.

Surfcoast's youngsters competed strongly across the pitch, but could not force a breakthrough.

Corio was too good for Geelong, winning by two-nil, though its opening goal had a touch of fortune about it. Elton Savice sprinted away down the left but his cross-shot seemed to be easy pickings for Romeo Purlija in the Geelong goal.

However, the ball eluded the keeper's grasp and crossed the line before he could retrieve it.

Michael Ilioski intercepted a Corio throw-in and forced a finger-tip save by Alec Kitanovski in the Corio goal.

Ilioski should have made more of a good break down the centre for Geelong but shot wide.

Corio made the points secure in 57 minutes when Mijo Marinovic set out after a long clearance from just inside his own half and sprinted away from his pursuers, finishing with a fine shot into the corner of the goal.

Corio coach Robbie Noggler was pleased with the way his team played out from the back and says they are gradually gaining in confidence in the game plan.

He has some first team players to come back and looks forward with confidence to a couple of matches with North Geelong to come.

LOOP Federation Cup – Round 1

By Russ Gibbs

Belconnen United will begin the defence of their loop Federation Cup with a testing fixture against ACTAS as the 2012 competition gets underway with Round 1 of matches this weekend.

The Blue Devils, who swept all before them in 2011, face a tricky assignment against the Academy team who will be out to start their participation with a bag. An intriguing tussle between revitalised Canberra FC and Weston Creek is the other match-up in Pool A. Across in Pool B, Premier League newcomers Canberra Olympic play Gungahlin United whilst Woden Valley, beaten finalists last year, kick off against State League One Goulburn Strikers.

Pool A
Belconnen United v ACTAS (ANU Willows 1, 1pm)

In what has the potential to be an explosive clash, loop Federation Cup holders Belconnen United meet ACTAS on the swift synthetic field of ANU Willows as Round 1 of the pre-season competition gets underway. The 2011 treble winners were in stunning form last season and will be keen to replicate their success of the last twelve months by starting the tournament with a win. Their squad is very similar to last year's cup-winning line-up although is

missing Golden Boot winner Caitlin Munoz, as the Canberra United Westfield W-League champion recovers from injury. Snezh Veljanovska, away overseas and Bronwyn Studman and Michelle Thompson, both injured. Head Coach Antoni Jagarinec has recruited stopper Sofia Merkouras from Belwest Foxes and combative midfielder Sarah Crittenden from Weston Creek to add depth to his already impressive team and ACTAS will certainly have their work cut out.

Weston Creek v Canberra FC (ANU Willows 1, 3pm)

Two teams with much to prove in 2012 clash in the first Pool A match of the afternoon as Weston Creek and Canberra FC go head to head at ANU Willows. Having been bolstered by several off-season recruits, including the Canberra United Westfield W-League winning trio Ashleigh Sykes, Grace Gill and Jennifer Bisset, Canberra FC enters the 2012 competition under the guidance of David Goldstein in good heart. Pool B

Woden Valley v Goulburn Strikers (AIS Synthetic, 1pm)

Making their first appearance in the loop Federation Cup Goulburn Strikers, who play in the State League One Division of the Women's competition have the unenviable task of facing Tradies

Premier League giants Woden Valley first up. If that's not daunting enough, the fact that Woden Valley will be keen to finally claim the piece of silverware that has eluded them since their formation could well make this mission impossible for the Southern Tablelands side. Woden has been runner's-up the past three seasons in the Federation Cup including their dramatic penalty shoot-out loss to Belconnen United in last year's finale.

Canberra Olympic v Gungahlin United (AIS Synthetic, 3pm)

Premier League newcomers Canberra Olympic are welcomed into the elite fold with a loop Federation Cup match against Gungahlin United at AIS Synthetic. Ironically, this time twelve months ago it was Gungahlin who were the newcomers to the top division and their relative success in 2011 should give Olympic hope in the months to come. This tie will be a good indication of where Olympic stand in the scheme of things as stern challenges lay ahead. The signing of Nicole Sykes from Canberra United will no doubt bolster the defence and the left-back joins a new crop of players with many experiencing top-flight football for the first time.

Couch Potato

* ALL TIMES ARE AEDT



SBS ONE
Friday 24 Feb
6.45am Live (aedt) - UEFA Europa League: Manchester United v Ajax

Sunday February 26th
10:30 AM UEFA Europa League Highlights
11:00 AM Les Murray's Football Feature - UEFA Champions League: Highlights from FC Basel v Bayern Munich (1st Leg).

12:00 PM UEFA Champions League Magazine Program

Monday 27th February
11.05 PM The World Game

SBS TWO
Saturday 25 February
7.00pm Delayed - UEFA Europa League: Manchester City v Porto

SBS TWO
Monday February 27th
09:30 PM The World Game

Saturday 25th February
03:30 am The Serie A Highlights Show

Wednesday 29th February
03:00 am Liverpool TV Liverpool V Everton

Thursday 01st March
02:30 am FA Cup Classics Luton Town V Liverpool 3rd Round 05/06
03:00 am Bundesliga Matchday 23: F.C Köln V Bayer Leverkusen
05:00 am Bundesliga Weekly Highlights
06:00 am Liverpool TV Sunderland V Liverpool
Friday 02nd March
01:00 am Serie A Juventus V Milan
03:00 am Arsenal TV Arsenal V Tottenham Hotspur
06:00 am FA Cup Classics Arsenal V Newcastle United Final 97/98



WORLD CUP QUALIFIER
Australia v Saudi Arabia
Wednesday 29 February
7.30 pm Fox 1

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE LIVE
Times listed are 7 minutes prior to kick-offs.

Week 29
Sun Feb 26 Chelsea v Bolton 1.53 am Fox 1
Sun Feb 26 Newcastle v Wolves 1.53 am Viewers Choice
Sun Feb 26 QPR v Fulham 1.53 am Viewers Choice
Sun Feb 26 WBA v S'land 1.53 am Viewers Choice
Sun Feb 26 Wigan v Aston Villa 1.53 am Viewers Choice
Sun Feb 26 Man City v Blackburn 4.23 am Fox 1
Mon Feb 27 Arsenal v Tottenham 12.15 am Fox 1
Mon Feb 27 Norwich v Man U 12.23 am Fox 2
Mon Feb 27 Stoke v Swansea 1.53 am Fox 3

CARLING CUP Final
Monday 27 February
Cardiff City v Liverpool
2.30 am (Fox 1)

ENGLISH FOOTBALL LEAGUE
Fri Feb 24 Derby v Leicester
6.30 am Fox 3
Sat Feb 25 West Ham v Crystal Palace 11.40 pm Fox 1
Tue Feb 28 L2: Shrewsbury v Crawley
6.30 am Fox 1

A-LEAGUE LIVE
Fri Feb 24 Newcastle v Adelaide 8.00 pm Fox 1
Sat Feb 25 Sydney v Wellington 5.30 pm Fox 1
Sat Feb 25 Gold Coast v Victory 7.45 pm Fox 1
Sat Feb 25 Perth v Brisbane 10.00 pm Fox 1
Sun Feb 26 Heart v Central Coast 5.00 pm Fox 1

FOX SPORTS FC
Every Tuesday 8.30 pm



Saturday 25-Feb
Bundesliga Round 23 Monchengladbach v Hamburg 6:25am LIVE
Scottish Premier League Round 28 St Mirren v Aberdeen 10:55pm LIVE

Sunday 26-Feb
Bundesliga Round 23 Werder Bremen v Nuremberg 4:25am LIVE
Ligue 1 Round 25 Lyon v PSG 6:45am LIVE
Ligue 1 Round 25 Montpellier v Bordeaux 9:00am 1st Airing
Eredivisie Round 23 Excelsior v Ajax 10:45am 1st Airing
Scottish Premier League Round 28 Inverness v Rangers 11:40pm LIVE

Monday 27-Feb
Eredivisie Round 23 PSV v Feyenoord 1:45am 1st Airing
Bundesliga Round 23 Dortmund v Hannover 3:25am LIVE
Ligue 1 Round 25 Rennes v Lille 6:45am LIVE
Primera Division Round 3 Teams TBC 9:00am LIVE
Ligue 1 Round 25 Brest v Marseille 1:45pm 1st Airing
Bundesliga Round 23 Bayern Munich v Schalke 3:30pm 1st Airing
Primera Division Round 3 Teams TBC 5:15pm 1st Airing

Tuesday 28-Feb
Eredivisie Round 23 AZ v Heerenveen 3:00am 1st Airing

Thursday 1-Mar
International Friendly England v Netherlands 6:55am LIVE



Alvaro Rodriguez's

NAME: Hungary
CAPITAL: Budapest
POPULATION: (2011 approx.) 9,979,000
CONFEDERATION: UEFA
INTERNATIONAL HONOURS: World Cup runners-up 1938 & 1954; Olympic gold-medalists 1952, '64 & '68, silver-medalists 1972, bronze-medalists 1960; European Championship third-place 1964
FIFA WORLD RANKING: 37th
'EURO CHAMPIONSHIP APPEARANCES: 1964, 1972
WORLD CUP APPEARANCES: 1934-38, 1954-66, 1978-86

WHO ARE YA?
A parliamentary republic, Hungary is situated in Central Europe, bordered by no less than seven countries(most notably Romania in terms of area). The land west of the Danube River in what is now Hungary was in turn subjugated and relinquished by Celts, Romans and Huns in the millennia spanning 500 years before and after Christ's birth. Later the Slavs left their cultural imprint on the land, and in the 9th Century AD the various tribes of the region united under a new national name; the Magyars, led by Árpád, a warrior prince who claimed himself a descendant of the legendary warlord Attila the Hun. Regarded even today as the 'Father of the Nation', Árpád and his descendants consolidated the Magyar peoples' regional hold, eventually resulting in the Kingdom of Hungary becoming a Western feudal state under Stephen I, Hungary's first King and descendant of Árpád in the 11th Century. So revered was he in life for his works that he was later canonised by the Pope, revered as 'Saint Stephen, Patron Saint of Hungary'.

After Stephen's death, his Kingdom expanded its borders in the next few centuries, absorbing Transylvania and Croatia among other nearby lands. The Crusades and the advance of the Mongol Empire threatened the kingdom's stability for a time, but it would be opposition from the Ottoman Empire and for a time, the Wallachian prince Vlad Tepes - Vlad the Impaler, the historical Count Dracula - during the early 1400s that is best remembered in history. The 1500s-1600s finally saw the decline of the dynastic Hungarian Kingdom following the Ottoman takeover, and the Hapsburg Monarchy's seizing upon what land had not been claimed by the Ottomans.

Despite Magyar animosity towards the Germanic Hapsburgs, the two forcibly united in the 'Dual Monarchy' in 1867, which saw the creation of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, doomed to crumble decades later as a result of World War I. The sovereign Hungary that emerged from the postwar wreckage was far from a stable country, and a generation later threw in its lot with the Axis Powers in WWII. The war's end again saw Hungary lay prostrate, only this time it would be swallowed up by the merging Soviet Bloc and its Iron Curtain, at the frontlines of the Cold War.

1956 saw the failed revolution which aimed to topple the overtly-Stalinist brand of socialism espoused by the ruling hardliners, and Hungary would remain an indelible part of the Warsaw Pact until the revolutions of 1989 that saw the Berlin Wall fall, eventually resulting in the end of European Communism and Hungary becoming a multiparty capitalist democracy in the early 1990s - this new era of freedom culminating in Hungary joining the European Union in 2004.

SO WHAT YOU DONE?
In the post-WWII era Hungary built on its two previous WC appearances(quarter-finalists in 1934 and losing finalists to Italy

Planet Football Hungary



The iconic Puskás in his prime (inset) and the spoils of victory with South Melbourne in '91 - Ange Postecoglou, Micky Petersen and Mehmet Durakovic are the South players.



Just in case the GPS isn't working...

in 1938) by reaching the Final of Switzerland '54, boasting one of the greatest teams of all time - the Magic Magyars led by the one-and-only Ferenc Puskás, 'The Galloping Major'. Going into the finals, the Magyars hadn't lost a senior international since 1950, along the way schooling England 6-3 at a packed Wembley Stadium on November 25th 1953; England's first-ever international home loss.

Playing an exciting and innovative brand of football, the Magyars were the clear favourites and so it was an almighty shock to the system when West Germany, in their first WC finals defeated the Magyars 3-2 in the Final at Bern, despite goals from Puskás and the lethal winger Zoltán Czibor in the first 8 minutes of the match. Only two months earlier the Magyars had put England to the sword 7-1 in Budapest, in the 'rematch' of Wembley '53.

The end of the 1950s coincided with that of the 'Magic Magyars', particularly as Puskás embarked on his stellar club career with Real Madrid. The Magyars qualified for the 1958 through to '66 World Cups but were by that stage effectively making up the numbers. Apart from third-place at the 1964 Euro Championship held in Spain, Hungary's only footballing successes were gold, silver and bronze Olympic medals spanning 1964 to '72.

The Magyars returned to the WC fray for Argentina '78, and in Spain '82 farcically defeated El Salvador 10-1(László Kiss became the first-ever substitute in WC history to score a hat-trick)...yet still failed to qualify out of the group stage! Mexico '86 saw the Magyars' WC swansong and indeed, their last major tournament appearance to date(the Atlanta '96 Olympics

notwithstanding).

BIG CLUBS
Ferencváros is the nation's powerhouse club, sharing a fierce rivalry with fellow Budapest sides MTK, Újpest FC and Honvéd. It has won a whopping 28 Hungarian League titles and 20 Hungarian Cups(although it has won neither since the 2004 Double), 4 Super Cups and also has the 1965 Fairs Cup(forerunner to the UEFA Cup/Europa League) to its name.

Újpest also have 20 titles to their name(last winning it in 1997/98) and losing semi-finalists to Bayern Munich in the 1973/74 European Cup(forerunner of the Champions League).

Honvéd, which formed the nucleus of the Magic Magyars in the '50s, have 13 titles, the last coming in 1993. Fallen power MTK boasts 23 league wins, 12 cups and losing finalists in the 1964 European Cup-Winners' Cup to Sporting Lisbon, but currently languish in the second division.

In recent times Debrecen has dominated the domestic scene(winning 5 titles between 2005-10), although Videoton(named after a local electronics company) are the reigning league champions, having won their inaugural title last season.

REP YOUR COLORS
Now merely called 'The Magyars', the Hungarian NT wears a red shirt, white shorts and green socks(as in the configuration of the national flag), and the away has changed over time although an all-white strip is favoured. Ferencváros, known as the Green Eagles wear a white/green strip; MTK wear a white shirt with a blue sash(think the Peruvian NT, River Plate or

Melbourne Heart's away-strip, but blue instead of red), blue shorts and white socks; Újpest(The Purples) wear purple and white stripes, either with purple or white shorts and socks; Honvéd (the name means 'Homeland Defence', as this was the army-backed club during the Cold War era) wear red and black thick-stripes, black shorts and red socks whilst Debrecen wear an all-red strip(the away is all-white) and Videoton wear a red & blue (purplish-shade) shirt with blue shorts and red socks.

MATCHWINNERS
Ferenc Puskás began his career at Honvéd in 1943(when the club still went by its original name, Kispest AC), joining Real Madrid in 1958 after two years in career limbo as a result of his defection to the West.

He played 182 games and scored 157 goals for Real in his eight-year tenure with the club, during which time he won virtually every available honour(particularly the 1960 European Cup Final vs. Eintracht Frankfurt, which Real won 7-3 in what is regarded by many as the greatest club match of the 20th Century) save the World Cup.

Upon retiring he became a coaching journeyman, in particular guiding Greek giants Panathinaikos to the 1971 European Cup Final(although they lost to Ajax Amsterdam) but he also coached in countries as diverse as the USA, Canada, Spain, Chile, Saudi Arabia(where he was NT coach in 1975), Egypt and Paraguay before, in what is undoubtedly still the greatest coaching coup in Australian sporting history, he sensationally took the helm of South Melbourne for the 1989/90 National Soccer League season, steering the club to the 1990/91 title with victory over the Melbourne Knights in the Grand Final at Olympic Park - South boasted such icons of the local game as Paul Trimball, Mick Petersen and the two recent A-League coaches pictured above (wink wink.), and thus the invaluable experience of Ferenc galvanised this talented squad to achieve what it did.

After leaving South, he briefly coached the Hungarian NT during the USA '94 qualifiers before gradually receding from public life, sadly passing away in 2006 aged 79.

His partners-in-crime in the Magic Magyars included Zoltán Czibor and forwards Sándor Kocsis and Nándor Hidegkuti(one of the 'Magyars who didn't play his club football for Honvéd), legends of Hungarian football all. In the post-Magyars era Flórián Albert, a youth-product of Ferencváros picked up the mantle during the 1960s with renown despite never playing abroad, after which Hungarian football's international decline began in earnest. He passed away last October aged 70.

In the '90s, defender Flórián Urbán was one of the few truly-talented Magyars but was unable to maximise his potential, and of the current crop midfielder Zoltán Gera has enjoyed a solid stay in England with West Brom and Fulham whilst great young hope, striker Krisztián Németh currently terrorises defences in the Dutch Eredivisie with RKC Waalwijk.

SO WHAT NOW?
Having long ago ceased to be a world power, the Magyars haven't qualified for a major tournament at senior level since the 1986 World Cup as reinforced by their failure to reach Euro 2012. Currently lumped in Group D of WC 2014 qualifying with Turkey and the Netherlands as their main rivals, there's still no easy games save the ones against minnows Andorra so breaking their long absence will be a tall order for the Magyars; although if their young crop such as Németh hit their strides at the crucial time, one just never knows...



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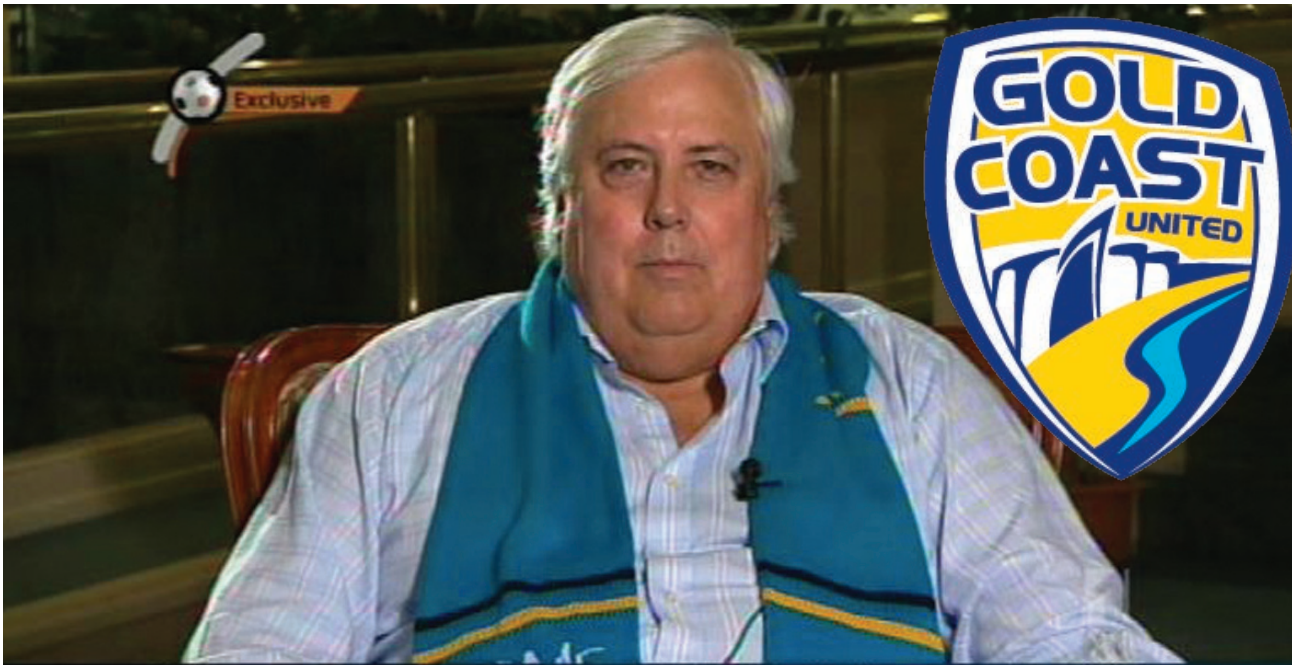
By Adrian Deans

Money talks they say. Its voice can sometimes sound pompous and shrill, but unwelcome? That's for the empty-pocketed listener to determine. In the wake of Clive Palmer's incredible outburst on the weekend, there has been a substantial moderation in the stances of both sides. Palmer is now saying that his comments (that the A-League is hopeless and that rugby league is a much better game) were taken out of context. Ah well, that's alright then...tricky thing context. At the same time the FFA, which had been showing signs of testicular resolve, is suddenly sounding much more conciliatory. After all, as Ben Buckley said: "Without Clive Palmer's investment, there wouldn't be a team on the Gold Coast." In other words, money was talking – shouting, in fact, and threatening to leave.

But before we jump to (what seem like) obvious conclusions, shouldn't we ask a few questions? Who exactly is Clive Palmer? And, is there any chance at all that he's in the right while the FFA are pissing on our backs and telling us it's raining?

* * *

Clive Palmer is 57 years old and the owner of mining company Mineralogy. His company (apparently) has \$20 billion worth of projects underway, and his personal fortune is believed to be in the vicinity of \$6 billion. He is a life member of the National Party and principal funder of the LNP in Queensland. He has previously been an adjunct professor of Deakin University and has underwritten numerous charitable and community projects. More relevantly, he is also the owner of the Gold Coast franchise and invested in the North Queensland Fury franchise. On the face of it, his investment suggests that his heart is in the right place. So what exactly is he complaining about? Clive's main beef seems to be that football is badly run by the FFA.



Gold Coast United owner Professor Clive Palmer holds no bars in the interview on SBS's The World Game last Monday night. Anyone for tennis?

He thinks that the FFA executives are too highly paid and haven't delivered the right results in terms of negotiations over TV rights; the World Cup bid; A-League expansion and promotion of the game. Most importantly, he believes that the FFA operates via secret agendas and excludes owner-investors from control of their own clubs. To be perfectly honest, I don't think there are too many reasonably-informed fans that wouldn't (to some extent) agree with him. But let's look at the other side of the coin. Since his gaffes on the weekend, Clive is claiming to have been taken out of context and seeking to reassure lovers of Australian football that he does like football and will fight to keep his A-League licence.

So what are his football credentials? Young Clive did not play football, nor did he have any (easily researchable) link with the game at all until bankrolling first Gold Coast United and then the late lamented

North Queensland Fury. Of course, the liker of football famously pulled his money out of the Fury and they went to the wall. Now the supporters of Gold Coast United are watching in agony as their beloved club is batted back and forth like a plaything of the gods. The question that the fans are asking is this: if Clive Palmer had no previous link with football, and doesn't even like the game (depending on the context) why on earth has he sunk nearly 0.03% of his money into an A-League club? It's not to make a profit, that's for sure. So if he expects to make a loss what does he get out of it? A warm inner glow in the knowledge that he is doing something for the game...the league...the fans? Doesn't look like it. Could it be, therefore, for less altruistic reasons? Does he like having a club to show off his wealth in the Roman Abramovic/Sheik Mansour tradition? If that was the case, he'd be throwing a lot more money and not quibbling over which stands were

open on match days. So that can't be it. There are some (mad-eyed conspiracy theorists, no doubt) who believe that Clive Palmer has no genuine interest in football. I have heard whispers and read blogs that swear Clive is only in football to help him do business in Asia. Such benighted ignoramuses also claim that if he had any real interest in growing football on the Gold Coast that he would have spent some money on community engagement and had an attractive ticket pricing strategy. He has not done so (they suggest) because his real audience is in Asia. Such claims do the anonymous bloggers and rumour mongers little credit, as there is surely some possibility that Clive did not get into football just to help sell iron ore. After his comments on the weekend (and it really is difficult to imagine a context in which his comments might be regarded as in-offensive), you'd imagine he'd want to wash his hands of the A-League once and for all – but apparently

not. He's now claiming that he is on the side of the fans and battling for their right to have a say in the running of the game and to buy iron ore. And he'll fight the FFA in court if they try to take his A-League licence away. So can they? Are there clauses in the ownership agreement which restrain the owner from behaviour, or making comments that bring the game into disrepute? I don't know, but in any case, Clive says Ben Buckley won't take him to court because he doesn't have the balls and is too worried about protecting his own salary. He also has an interesting legal argument regarding Mr Buckley's standing in law: apparently a court of law will regard Mr Buckley as an AFL man whose loyalty is not to soccer. What legal effect that might have is beyond my legal brain, but I can just see the judges of the Supreme Court, resplendent in their wigs, robes and football scarves, shooting down all of Ben Buckley's arguments with: "Pull the other one Ben...we know you're really an

Aussie Rules plant. You don't care about football like Clive does!" But seriously, has Clive Palmer brought the game into disrepute? At once we run into the definitional problem – what sort of behaviour or comments amount to bringing the game into disrepute? What if such behaviour or comments can somehow be justified – or partially justified? I would suggest that embarrassing a player, a coach and a club by insisting that a 17 year old be made captain on debut is at very least disrespectful. What does such an action say about Clive Palmer? Could he be saying: "I don't care about the traditional need to pay your dues and earn the respect of team mates before taking on a leadership role."; "I don't care about undermining the coach's authority and forcing him to resign."; and "I couldn't give a rat's about the fans and their love for the club...I'm going to make an untried 17 year old captain, turn the club into a laughing stock and badmouth the A-League because I can." Surely not.

The tragedy is that Clive Palmer probably has some genuine points that need to be made for the good of the game, but to make his points in such a destructive and incoherent manner will have the rival codes rubbing their hands in glee as football once again shoots itself in the foot when its on-field stocks are rising. And Ben Buckley's response to all this? After saying initially that he was angry, Ben is now saying: "We'll probably have some discussions with Clive over the next few weeks..." The next few weeks? Why not now? Because money talks and the FFA is terrified of what it might say. It might say goodbye.

Adrian Deans is the author of Mr Cleansheets – published by Vulgar Press, distributed by Dennis Jones and Associates and available in all good book store. These are his personal views.

Time for FFA to keep its nerve

By Roy Hay

The eruption of the ebullient Clive Palmer, multi-millionaire natural resources baron and owner of Gold Coast United, as self-appointed spokesman for the owners of the A-League clubs has Football Federation Australia (FFA) on the back foot. He wants more say for the owners who are bankrolling the league, though their total contribution is probably less than that contributed by the public, through their purchase of tickets, merchandise, sponsors' products and above all, tax concessions and direct subsidies by Federal, State and local governments.

It must gall the owners that one of Australia's richest men, Frank Lowy, presides over the FFA and the A-League but is apparently unwilling to dip into his own pocket to support the league. But if Lowy did so the media would be jumping on his back straight away, as they did at the start of the league,

with cries of 'conflict of interest'. He and his family helped a number of clubs financially to meet the stringent financial conditions for entry laid down. Subsequently they assisted the ownership transitions which occurred in others. Most of this was done by stealth to avoid a public outcry. In doing so Lowy was repeating something he had once done as the leader of the Hakoah club in the 'bad old days' of the Australian Soccer Federation (ASF). He put his house up as a guarantee for the funding of the club, and then realised the idiocy of that approach. From then on he was determined that football must run as a business and be self-sustaining, not dependent on one-off donations by benefactors.

The dilemma remains, what is the best strategy for the A-League to become a self-sustaining entity? Several people, including David Crawford, the Professional Footballers Association, Wilson Smith



Calm down, calm down. Elle McPherson will fix it...

and some of the current owners have argued for the A-League to become a separate entity from the FFA, or at the very least for the owners to have a greater influence over its operation. These are arguable cases, but the historical record and the example of other sporting operations in Australia are not favourable.

The Victorian Football League used to be run by its clubs, until Sir Kenneth Luke built Waverley Park to break their control and that of the ground managers who administered the venues at which the game was played. Eventually the AFL, as it became, set up a commission to run the game and over time this took the kind of control it now has today under

Andrew Demetriou and his board. And they have done reasonably well, thank you, despite recent complaints about losses and Demetriou's remuneration. There are major differences, of course. The AFL does not have to run an expensive international game in senior, junior, male and female competitions as FFA has to do. The success of the Socceroos sometimes cross-subsidises the domestic league.

Most people have blamed ethnic politics for the problems of soccer under the old ASF, but in fact the main factor was the governing structure set up at the foundation of that body in 1961. As a paper at the time said, it was government of the clubs, by the clubs, for the clubs. That might have been fine had the game continued in the same way as it had done since the 1880s, but within a decade the game had gone national and international, with the ultimately successful attempt to qualify for

the World Cup in 1974. The success could not be repeated and the key reason was that the clubs through the state federations controlled the ASF, the tail was wagging the dog.

Given the current requirements of the game as a whole, returning to club control for the A-League would be a recipe for disaster. The current structure is not perfect, but changes should be very carefully thought through and above all the FFA must not pander to those critics in the media who cannot distinguish between income and wealth, or who want to treat these fundamental issues about the health of the game as items for public amusement by pillorying the current members of the FFA executive.

Roy Hay is a member of the History Panel of the FFA and is working on a history of the game in Australia with Bill Murray. These are his personal views.

Hume could fume over Foster



MACKENZIE AT LARGE

With Craig MacKenzie

DANDENONG Thunder hopes that it has stolen a march on its rivals by signing Canadian striker Nathaniel (Nate) Foster.

And we can excuse Hume City if it is quietly praying that the 22-year-old from Brampton, Ontario, doesn't set the VPL alight for he trained with Hume for a week shortly after his arrival in Australia last month.

His trip was prompted by contact with a college friend playing with Bundoora United's women's team and Foster hasn't taken long to set his sights even higher.

"My aim right now is to win games with Thunder and if I do well then maybe I can move up to the A-League," he said.

So far fitting in with Thunder has been a breeze. "The boys are great. They made me feel welcome and I love being around them."

And head coach Chris Taylor also gets a tick of approval.

"He's been really good. He's pointed out my weaknesses and we're working on things," Foster added.

Thunder signed Foster from Ottawa-based Capital City FC. His previous club was Mississippi Brilla FC in the United Soccer Leagues.

As a teenager Foster had gone from college in Canada to the University of Montevallo in Shelby County, Alabama where he had an outstanding senior year with 18 goals and was named the university's Athlete of the Year in 2010.

His pace and athleticism were on show at Lawton Park, Langwarrin last Saturday afternoon when the locals played host to the Albanian-backed Thunder.

And although Thunder had the ball on a string for long periods they were slightly taken aback when they went in at the break at 2-2. The scoreline was a gentle slap in the face for the VPL side given that they were facing a State Two competitor.

The second half sparked into action when experienced Shane Rexhepi swung an arm dangerously close to the head of Langy striker Caleb Nicholes who had gone to ground after a challenge.

It was an unusually undisciplined act by Rexhepi and he may well be surprised to learn that had he made firmer contact he could have knocked out a minister in a Christian church (see next story).

I guess you could say that it was a good hit-out for both clubs with Thunder easing to a 3-2 win.

Craig Elvin played for the visitors. He's been training with Thunder in somewhat of a cloak-and-dagger affair as the club wanted it kept under wraps and stopped the news from being leaked via its website. Thunder was trying to sign Elvin as we went to press.

As previously mentioned in this column Sean McIlroy has joined from Heidelberg as has former Thunder favourite Hamlet Armenian.

Defender Bryan Bran, ex-Melbourne Knights, has been signed from Oakleigh; Adam Casey, a former AIS, Sydney FC and North Queensland Fury forward or attacking midfielder has joined from Dandaloo in the Illawarra Premier League; Domenic D'Angelo was snapped up from Springvale White Eagles; while experienced mid-



Canadian recruit Nate Foster with Thunder coach Chris Taylor. Photo courtesy Dandenong Thunder.

Gerry McAleer, Bill Piculovski, Robert Spasevski, Robert Stojcevski, Zoran Trajeski, Spase Najdovski, Nick Cuculeski, John Angelovski, David Petkovski, Zlatko Ilievski, Nick Lazarevski, Ivan Filipovski, Tony Neceski, Steven Talevski and several more.

And as the hype builds and word spreads it's expected that many other past players will answer the call to arms.

In a major coup for the event, former Macedonian national team coach and twice Preston coach, Andon Donevski, will coach the Preston NSL Legends team assisted by former Preston coach from the mid 1980s, Bill Murray.

Donevski, himself a key member of the club's new fundraising sub-committee, said he couldn't wait for the day to come.

"It's going to be a special feeling seeing all those familiar faces in the dressing room again and renewing friendships with all the boys that I had the pleasure of coaching," he told the Preston website.

Former Preston Makedonia captain, George Petrov, is also looking forward



Bethany and Liam Bentley were beaming at Brighton last Friday.

to the thrill of lining up alongside his old teammates again.

"As a kid growing up following Preston and then to play for the club during the glory days of the NSL, I immediately jumped at the chance to play and give something back to the club at their time of need," he said.

Petrov brings back memories of one of my sillier moments in football. Admittedly there were many.

I'd gone into the dressing rooms at the old Olympic Park No 1 ground prior to the start of the 1985 NSL southern division grand final between Makedonia and Brunswick Juventus.

Senior coach Murray told me that Petrov wasn't playing and said that the youngster was struggling to come to terms with the decision.

I found Petrov standing near the entrance to the player race watching the curtain raiser and I stupidly tried to console him by telling him that he'd have plenty more opportunities to play in grand finals.

Despite his age Petrov was savvy enough to know that what I was saying was ridiculous. And polite enough not to tell me.

But back to the present. The club will also be giving two lucky supporters a fabulous opportunity to line-up alongside their heroes and take part in the legends game. These two spots will be up for auction online until Friday 16 March with bidding to start at \$100.

Those who want to have a crack at this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity should email their name, address, phone number, date of birth and bid amount to PLFCsubcommittee@gmail.com. Supporters will be updated throughout the bidding process via the club's facebook page, website and e-Newsletter.

As a special memento of the day, the lucky winners will also get to keep their jersey which will be signed personally by all of the legends in action.

The big match will be preceded by a clash between the current Preston Lions senior team and Altona Magic for the annual Traianedes-Micevski Cup. Both reserves teams will also play against each other earlier in the day.

Entry is \$10 for adults and \$5 concession and children. The reserves clash starts at 12 noon, the senior clash starts at 2pm and the legends game kicks off at 4pm.

Bayern beckons for MFS
GEORGE Campbell has more than the Preston Legends Game on his mind right now.

The head man of the Melbourne Football Stars academy is negotiating with Bayern Munich as part of a German component recently added to the itinerary for the MFS 2012 European tour later this year.

"We are negotiating a game against either Bayern Munich Academy team or a Bavarian select," said Campbell.

"We will play Espanyol Academy in Spain again as they are keen to continue the relationship."

Last year was the first year that Spain was included in the MFS itinerary and it proved a masterstroke with the young squad also taking in a La Liga game as well as enjoying guided tours of some of the most famous stadia in world football.



The MFS 2011 touring squad, back row (left to right): Andy Bozikas (Coach), Zack Merry, Matthew Campbell, Thomas Leech, Christian Bryden, Christian Rogan, Patrick Chysynski, Stuart MacLeod, Julian Caminiti, Tyler James, George Campbell (Head Coach). Front: Mathue Frichithavong, Liam O'Connell, Michael Demarco, Ricardo Rodrigues, Shyam Prakash, Rory Smyth, Hugh Pascoe and Ross Clark.



V-LEAGUE

NIKE PREMIERSHIP

Round Fourteen

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TEAMS SCRAMBLE AS TRANSFER WINDOW SHUTS

By Jimmy Soufis

FC Essendon 4 – 12 Metropolitan FC
A massive rivalry kicked off Round 14 with the wanderers hoping to turn around their poor form of late against a faltering sky blues outfit.

Alija Rezepovic goalless in the last two weeks looked in ominous form early and managed to grab the opener. The lead was short lived as Nadim El Zein equalized, before V-League legend Alexander Stevanovic linked up with Alija to finish with a classy header to send them 2-1 ahead.

From there on it were goals galore with Stevanovic & Avdic grabbing hat-tricks for the sky blues followed by doubles to Dino Rezepovic and Tomoslav Grigic. Even Goalkeeper Yane Coceski got on the score sheet from the 5th foul penalty spot.

As for the beleaguered wanderers 2 goals from Vlado Zoric & 1 to new signing Anthony Hammer were conciliation on a poor night at the office for Essendon which had them sitting in 6th and in danger of dropping even lower while for Metro the win pushes them up into the top 4.

Pascoe Vale FC 13-4 Fitzroy FC
The second clash of the night was sure to be fiery one with transfers between the two clubs adding a little bit of spice to the clash.

James Blackburn had crossed from Fitzroy to Pascoe Vale just hours before the clash while just as the window opened Fitzroy snatched Italian international Robert Armellini from the lions. It was only fitting that Blackburn would open the scoring for the lions.

Fitzroy's newest signing Lucas Johns looked menacing hitting the upright early on but his miss was soon punished again by Blackburn doing the double over his former side.

Things were going from bad to worse for the tigers as Andre Caro slammed home a free kick to give his side full control. The goals did not stop there as Caro got his second minutes later. Joao Da Silva had a 5th foul penalty saved and the tigers made them pay with a smartly taken corner from Johns finished by the burley defender Shayan Rachidi just on half time.

Some good work by Adam Hussein set up Blackburn for his hat-trick. A well taken free kick had Da Silva on the score sheet before Chris Yang pulled one back for the tigers. As both sides traded goals with Da Silva bagging his double, Ernie Simsek joined in the party scoring 2 quick goals.

Former Pascoe Vale player Armellini helped himself to a goal. Although Ernie seemed in ominous touch getting 2 more quick ones to lift his tally to 4 for the night. Da Silva nabbed his hat-trick & Brenno Polatti rounded off the lions scoring.

There would be one more twist with an own goal to former player James



Alexander Stevanovic (left) showed glimpses of his glory days bagging 3 goals in his teams commanding win over Essendon.



Harry Kitharidis had a memorable night in goals making some crucial saves in the tight victory over Brunswick.



After a few quiet weeks Maxi Avram (centre) was back to his brilliant best putting 6 past a hapless Mickleham.

Blackburn capping off the night. The win helped the lions stay in sight of North Melbourne while Fitzroy sit 7th after the defeat.

CF Brunswick 4-6 Ashburton FC
The Middle clash of the night proved to be a cracker with early goals to Ravel Tavares for Ashburton before Muhammad Algorabi put one past his former side to level the scores.

Jose Portillio kept up his goal scoring form giving Brunswick a 2-1 lead. Another man in top form was Soufiane Soufi he dragged his side back into the game but it was the green machines defense which was a worry with Mike Sharples handing the bloods the lead for the 3rd time in the match.

It was proving to be goal for goal when Leonardo Correa snatched his first of the night to level the scores at

3-3.

The difference in the end was the big Frenchman Soufiane Soufi getting the final 3 goals for Ashburton to finish his night off with 4 while Callum Davies got his first goal for the club the win sends Ashburton on the fringe of the four while Brunswick loose more ground on the top 8 sitting in 9th 5 points off the pace.

Mickleham FC 2-15 FC Prahran
The next clash saw strugglers Mickleham take on a high flying Prahran. It was Ben Armstrong who opened the scoring for the warriors followed by goals to Cameron Holmes and Maxi Avram.

The Hammers managed to pull one back through Iman Arjomand. The goal was followed by a rampage from Prahran as Maxi finished his hat-trick before

a double to Hep Tran had Mickleham looking like a second rate side.

Holmes completed his hat-trick before Resit Culcugluglu got on the board and Maxi Aram put 3 more past the hapless Jamie Tran to lift his tally to 6 for the night as Armstrong got his hat-trick in the commanding win which kept them within sight of the top 2 while Mickleham look almost certain for the relegation battles.

Brimbank FC 3-5 North Melbourne
The last clash of Round 14 saw league leaders North Melbourne battle lowly ranked Brimbank.

In form Adam Cooper opened the scoring for the vipers before Bruisers danger man Aden Alicevic equalized. The game was extremely close and there were some nervous moments for the champions they had a chance to go ahead through Adam cooper

but he blew his spot kick. Brimbank were doing everything they could to keep their much more highly rated opposition and if not for Christos Apostolakis it could have been a different story.

Adam Coopers shot was turned in by Mirza Pedic and it was those two pulling the vipers closer towards the title as Pedic scored again from a cooper assist.

Arin Mesinovic gave Brimbank a sniff but it was quickly killed off with goals to Alex Jankovic and Anthony Brown. Emir Ameti got a late conciliation but that was all Brimbank could muster as North went a step closer to their 4th V-League Crown while Brimbank looked battered and bruised sitting in 10th and in real danger of missing out on the Futsal Oz Cup.

V-League Standings

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 North Melbourne FC	13	12	0	0	89	31	58	39
2 Pascoe Vale FC	13	11	2	0	101	37	64	35
3 FC Prahran	14	10	2	2	91	49	42	32
4 Metropolitan FC	14	6	2	6	108	80	28	20
5 Ashburton FC	14	6	2	6	82	81	1	20
6 FC Essendon	14	6	1	7	78	90	-12	19
7 Fitzroy FC	14	6	1	7	96	76	-15	19
8 FC Balwyn	13	6	0	7	62	62	0	18
9 CF Brunswick	14	4	1	9	60	82	-22	13
10 Brimbank FC	14	3	2	9	56	73	-17	11
11 Mickleham FC	14	3	1	10	59	118	-59	10
12 FC Richmond	13	0	2	11	43	111	-68	2

Round 14 RESULTS

Wed 22nd Feb

• 6:30 FC Richmond v FC Balwyn	T. B. A
• 7:15 Metropolitan FC v FC Essendon	12 - 4
• 8:00 Pascoe Vale FC v Fitzroy FC	13 - 4
• 8:45 CF Brunswick v Ashburton FC	4 - 6
• 9:30 Mickleham FC v FC Prahran	2 - 15
• 10:15 Brimbank FC v North Melbourne FC	3 - 5

Round 14 CLASHES

Wed 29th Feb

• 6:30 Metropolitan FC v FC Richmond
• 7:15 Pascoe Vale FC v Ashburton FC
• 8:00 North Melbourne FC v FC Prahran
• 8:45 Mickleham FC v FC Essendon
• 9:30 Brimbank FC v Fitzroy FC
• 10:15 CF Brunswick v FC Balwyn

Top Goal Scorers

1. Joao Da Silva pvfc	33
2. Alija Rezepovic mfc	31
3. Maxi Avram pfc	31
4. Leonardo Correa afc	23

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C44Digital



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JIMMY SOUFIS & MATT MONTGOMERY



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Holger names Socceroo squad for Saudis

Qantas Socceroos Head Coach Holger Osieck today named a 19-player squad for the upcoming 2014 FIFA World Cup Asian Qualifiers against Saudi Arabia (AAMI Park, Melbourne, 29 February 2012).

Osieck has selected 4 players who were part of the Potential Qantas Socceroos camp that formed in Sydney in October last year including Central Coast Mariners Mat Ryan, Gold Coast United's Michael Thwaite and Brisbane Roar's Eric Paartalu. Coming into the Qantas Socceroos squad are a host of big names and some returning heroes of the green and gold including captain Lucas Neill, Brett Emerton, Harry Kewell & Mark Schwarzer along with other Hyundai A-League stars including Nick Carle, Archie Thompson and debutant Melbourne Heart defender Michael Marrone.

And making his long awaited return to the Qantas Socceroos, Mark Bresciano comes back into the team following some strong showings for Al Nasr Sports Club in UAE including eight goals in 11 matches in the Pro-League.

With a strong mix of European, Asian and Hyundai A-League based players Osieck is pleased he will get the chance to run his eye over some new inclusions before selecting his team to take the park on Wednesday night at AAMI Park.

"This match is as important as any match we play to further build on what we have achieved so far," said Osieck. "Each match we play is a chance for



Heart's Michael Marrone earns his first Socceroo call up

players to prove themselves and their position in the squad.

"The players included from the A-League will get a closer look throughout the camp and I will make up my mind if I play them from our sessions."

The Qantas Socceroos will assemble in Melbourne from Sunday before their final Group D match against Saudi Arabia on Wednesday, 29 February 2012 at AAMI Park.

Football Federation Australia (FFA) can also advise that due to a FIFA ruling both matches in Group D will kick-off simultaneously at 8.30pm AEDT.

FFA would like to thank the Football Associations of Saudi Arabia, Thailand

and Oman for their enormous co-operation in agreeing to reschedule the kick-off time originally advised by FIFA for 9.30pm AEDT.

The Qantas Socceroos are currently at the top of Group D with maximum points from their opening five matches followed by Saudi Arabia in second place then Oman and Thailand.

The match will be broadcast live and exclusive throughout Australia by FOX SPORTS.

Group B Standings									
Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	
Australia	5	4	0	1	9	3	6	12	
Saudi Arabia	5	1	3	1	4	3	1	6	
Oman	5	1	2	2	1	6	-5	5	
Thailand	5	1	1	3	4	6	-2	4	

The Match

Socceroos vs. Saudi Arabia
Wednesday 29 February, 2011
AAMI Park, Melbourne
Kick Off: 8.30pm AEDT
Gates Open: 6.30pm AEDT

Socceroo Squad

BRESCIANO, Mark
Al Nasr Sports Club, UAE
BROSQUE, Alex
Shimizu S-Pulse, JAPAN
CARLE, Nick
Sydney FC, AUSTRALIA
CARNEY, David
FK Bandyodkor Tashkent, UZBEKISTAN
EMERTON, Brett
Sydney FC, AUSTRALIA
KEWELL, Harry
Melbourne Victory FC, AUSTRALIA
MARRONE, Michael
Melbourne Heart FC, AUSTRALIA
MILLIGAN, Mark
Melbourne Victory FC, AUSTRALIA
NEILL, Lucas
Al-Jazira Club, UAE
NORTH, Jade
Consadole Sapporo, JAPAN
OGNEVSKI, Sasa
Seongnam Ilhwa Chunma, STH KOREA
PAARTALU, Erik
Brisbane Roar FC, AUSTRALIA
RYAN, Matt (GK)
Central Coast Mariners FC, AUSTRALIA
SAROTA, Adam
FC Utrecht, HOLLAND
SCHWARZER, Mark (GK)
Fulham FC, ENGLAND
SPIRANOVIC, Matthew
Urawa Red Diamonds, JAPAN
THOMPSON, Archie
Melbourne Victory FC, AUSTRALIA
THWAITE, Michael
Gold Coast United, AUSTRALIA
TROISI, James
Kayserispor Kulubu, TURKEY

SHORT PASSES

FFA Chairman To Speak At Heart Of Business Function

Melbourne Heart FC has secured a coup with the announcement Football Federation Australia Chairman Frank Lowy will be the Club's guest speaker at its Heart of Business function on February 28.

Mr. Lowy, 81, was a key architect behind the launch of the Hyundai A-League and Australia's push into Asia, catapulting football firmly into the domestic sporting consciousness.

Overseeing the Socceroos qualification to successive FIFA World Cup Finals, Mr. Lowy's stewardship has ushered in a new dawn for Australian football, laying the foundation for the sport's long term future.

"The Club is delighted to be hosting FFA Chairman Mr. Frank Lowy at our annual Heart of Business Function next week," Melbourne Heart FC Chairman Peter Sidwell said.

"There could not be a better time for Mr. Lowy to outline his view on the Australian football landscape as the current season approaches its conclusion.

"We thank Mr. Lowy for his attendance, and look forward to hearing his thoughts on the state of the game, and his vision for the future."

Staged at the Crown Entertainment Complex, the 2012 Heart of Business function will feature some of the most prominent members of Australian football and corporate life, including News Limited CEO Kim Williams and Football Federation Australia CEO Ben Buckley.

Tickets to the Heart of Business function are still available by calling the Club on 0466 773 433 or via email at ben.joske@melbourneheartfc.com.au.

QPR signs Skapetis

English Premier league club Queens Park Rangers can confirm the signing of Petros Skapetis from South Melbourne FC.

The 17-year-old striker, who can also play wide, has penned a 18-month professional contract and joins the Club's Centre of Excellence as a First Year Scholar.

Head of Youth Development Steve Gallen told the QPR website: "We are pleased to bring Petros in. he's a good lad. He's quick, bright, lively and he wants to score goals.

"He can also play on the flanks and get crosses into the box. He is a good addition to our youth department."

Saudi beat Kiwis U23

The New Zealand U-23 football team have been beaten 3-0 by the Saudi Arabia national team in Melbourne, in a testing encounter that coach Neil Emblen says will do their Olympic preparations a power of good.

The Saudis are in the Victorian capital to prepare for a crucial FIFA World Cup qualifier against Australia on February 29 and the experience of the more senior side told as they dominated large periods of possession.

Next match

New Zealand 'A' v Saudi Arabia National Team
Lakeside Stadium, Melbourne
on Friday February 24 with KO at 7pm.

Compiled By Alvaro Rodriguez

WHAT'S HOT

Quite possibly the only 'hot' aspect of the whole GCU/Clive Palmer saga is ex-A-League CEO Archie Fraser's comments on SEN radio strongly alluding to the possibility of Big Clive cocking a snook at the FFA by establishing his own 'rebel league', potentially with the Gold Coast

in it! Given what history says about FIFA's take on rebel leagues in its member countries, we really don't want to risk the world body's wrath and have them suspend Australia's membership like what happened some 50 years ago - but in saying that, they seem to be fine with Indonesia's situation where the champion of their unsanctioned league, Persipura just took on Adelaide United in an Asian Champions League qualifier. Maybe it's just the AFC who's cool with these things then, so who knows. All I do know is that if there's even a skerrick of truth to a rival comp set up and run by Clive in the offing, it's a story we'll have only just begun to scratch the surface of, so watch this space...



With a Rebel Yell they cried more, more, more!

WHAT'S NOT

Needless to say surely, every other aspect of said saga up on the Goldie. First 17-year-old debutant Mitch Cooper is given the captain's armband in the match vs. Melbourne Heart, a move which Miron Bleiberg is said to be supportive of before then dismissing it as 'merely ceremonial'. Compounded with the problems and bad PR surrounding the GC club since its inception, billionaire owner Clive Palmer then allegedly bags

the very game of football itself as 'not to his liking' and 'inferior to what the GC Titans play'... before appearing live on SBS' The World Game show where he clarified his comments as referring to the FFA and its running of the A-League and game, stating he does like football after all...geez, what to believe? Clearly flying his colours to the anti-Buckley-administration mast in that chinwag with Fozzie & Co., Clive did raise *some* worthwhile issues best left for another day but not changing the fact his club is in PR crisis, and that's usually just as bad as being in financial crisis in my view. On top of all that, ol' Miron was given the flick as GCU gaffer, thus depriving us of another of top-flight Oz football's true characters, actual coaching-nous aside. All one can really say to this whole affair is: when will it all end?



Miron will now have to look at coaching another new franchise...Western Sydney perhaps?

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PERU IN ITS WORST EVER FOOTBALL CRISIS

Latin Wrap



Francis Fields

As Neymar this week has spent his time, as any big-star Brazilian sensation would, party up with Carnaval there are far more grim and opposite pictures that are occurring at a time of Lent.

Sacrifice as a virtue for us all particularly for a football player in a career that can be short-spanned, the scenario for Peruvian football players is rather difficult, compromising and questions the ethics at play of what professionalism can encompass.

According to local media a 2-year payment plan was in the works, but six teams had not been able to reach a deal with Safap, the players union (ADFP), who are insisting the teams pay the outstanding fees over the next 12 months.

After the players announced they would not play, clubs decided to go ahead with the 'Descentralizado' tournament, and play with their youth squad. Inti Gas fired all its players, and its coach, after the team refused to play on Saturday.

On Saturday, Universidad de San Martín announced it would leave the professional game in the country, after its players refused to travel to the city Arequipa for their scheduled match against Melgar.

Peru's football chief Manuel Burga left the country for Switzerland today with the national championship in chaos over a wage conflict.

There was a bizarre start to the championship at the weekend as some teams fielded junior players because the professionals were on strike over money owed by a majority of the clubs including the big two, Universitario and Alianza Lima.

From earlier in the week, several newspapers - not only sport or football-specific dailies had covered its front pages with the scandals over on the other side of the Pacific.

For many, this is the worst case in the history of the Peruvian game.

Synonymous are back-door deals, money laundering, dressing rooms in precarious conditions, stadium violence, late wages in payments and bonuses and other unprofessional and illicit acts that quite simply do not fit the bill.

So the ball has exploded. "¡Pelota reventada!", "Caos en el fútbol", "Se van todos", were just some of the main headlines.

With an exploded ball, with chaos in the administrative ranks of the game, with board members, clubs and players walking out and others threatening to quit, it is the antithesis of a disaster.

Last weekend, Peru's professional football players decided to go on strike, in protest of what could be one of a long battle. It is the decision upon the many clubs not acting on unpaid wages since 2011 in all of its twelve monthly payments.



National team coach Sergio Markarian in an archived image, expressed concerns over the crisis ahead of the Tunisia friendly and the qualifiers this year



Universidad de San Martín announced earlier this week the dissolution as a professional football club. Peru's crisis has 'amateurised' a few clubs.

The short term solution has seen a positive introduction of youth players to fill in the void but for how long will the threat go for?

Universidad San Martín, based in the capital Lima, announced its retirement of all professional football activity for "treason" from its players - deciding not to field against Melgar in the opening round of the Torneo Descentralizado.

In the second division, Universidad César Vallejo and Unión Comercio also shut its gates. Of the three, only San Martín made its decision effective from as early in the week. Unlike some of the other clubs, these three teams don't have any outstanding debt with their players.

In other words, these well-run clubs decided to impose self-exile as a result of their good deeds.

For a club well-run, wealthy, backed heavily from a university that holds prestige and a heavy involvement in the community, within the Peruvian social bracket in not just football but across many sports at both amateur and professional levels, it is a truly sad note.

Sport Huancayo's outstanding coach Miguel Company, currently in the prestigious Copa Libertadores and a former coach of Cuba and Peru, demanded the cancellation of the first match of the tournament, which was played with reserve players over the weekend, and that the start of the tournament be delayed for two weeks, after negotiations to solve the strike are held.

"The conduct of the squad heads a grave degree of consequences, as such we have taken the unanimous decision from the Board to commence proceedings of dismissals", announced Universidad San Martín football spokesman.

Its players have been paid on time, and are not going through such issues that warrant a strike. Their actions were solely based as support and in solidarity for its colleagues.

For César Acuña, president of the

Universidad César Vallejo (located north in Trujillo), the announcement came on Tuesday when its squad gathered to decide important issues in a meeting that lasted a few hours.

In the meeting, the announcements made called for its players to resign from the Agrupación de Futbolistas if the intentions are to remain at the club.

Football commentator Phillip Butters, a widely respected figure in the country declared to AFP that "the championship must be suspended immediately to stop the mass-wave exodus. Clubs cannot afford to leave and the Peruvian FA along with the professional body, the Asociación Deportiva de Fútbol Profesional (ADFP), (the Sporting Association of Professional Football) board and the SAPAF (the players' union) needs to be reformed.

Many of the aforementioned clubs want to repay in installments covering 24 months and not 12 according to players. The ADFP proposed eighteen months, which was also not accepted by the Players' Union.

The main, popular and giant Peruvian clubs Universitario (in debt of around \$US 1.5 million), Cienciano (\$US 700,000) and Alianza Lima (\$US 570,000) lead a horrid example of a professional sporting body ridden in salary debt.

"The shameless acts, chaos and corruption is for all to see. The worst thing is that clubs like Universitario, Alianza, Cienciano, Sport Boys do not have means to pay and not even a structure to gain any capital", criticised Butters.

This week was also telling as players, clubs and the Peruvian Football league continued to find ways for solutions and agreements to the conflict. Such a crisis puts the Brazil World Cup 2014 campaign and eligibility in jeopardy according to FIFA statutes.

To avoid such calamity, the president of Alianza Lima, Guillermo Alarcón proposed a project to the Peruvian Olympic Committee to act as a mediator

between the parties thus declaring an involvement not to affect its players.

The head of the Peruvian Olympic Committee José Quiñones also announced willingly to act as a mediator and in doing so, of solving a new negotiation with the Football Players Union. "At Alianza Lima, there will be no sanctions. We understand their position, where they are coming from. We want to wipe off our debt but all we ask is to negotiate the terms. We have made a huge effort to try talking to the Players' Union but to no avail".

Peruvian Football Federation (FPF) president Manuel Burga headed for talks with FIFA at the Zurich headquarters of soccer's ruling body after appointing delegates to deal with the problems back home, according to media reports.

Burga left a letter to debtors in arrears and gave orders to lower-ranking officials to carry out negotiations scheduled for today with head of the Football Players Union, Francesco Manassero.

Meanwhile, Universidad San Martín, ratified the decision to abandon the tournament in view of its players' joining the strike in spite of the fact that they have been paid, and threatened them with legal measures and denunciation to FIFA, as a result of which they can face long suspensions.

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The players' union SAPAF called the strike after rejecting a plan from the league organisers ADFP for clubs to refinance their debts.

Manassero blamed the clubs, saying they had prevented a healing process in Peruvian football which has suffered years of underachievement at international and domestic level.

"They gave us no way out. If we let them decide the amount (of the debts) and how much they should pay us we're going to be waiting until the end of time. We cannot allow the players to be mistreated," Manassero said. 'Here it seems normal to owe four or five months' wages and to want to refinance that in two years,' he was quoted as telling Blanco y Negro radio yesterday. 'All this is the consequence of the clubs and the FPF's apathy in not doing anything to resolve this conflict.'

SAN MARTIN CLOSURE

San Martín, who won the title three times between 2007-10 and are one of the few teams in good financial order, said they were dissolving the club because their players had joined the strike. The San Martín board refused to send juniors to play against Melgar in the southern city of Arequipa, forfeiting the points.

"(Today we) will withdraw from the championship and the club will be closed," general manager Álvaro Barco told the leading daily El Comercio's website. 'We feel the players have turned their backs on us.' San Martín president Raúl Bao García, who along with his board risks a life ban from football if the club withdraw from the league, said the squad were wrong to show solidarity with the union.

BAD NEWS FOR THE NATIONAL TEAM

The chaos in the championship is bad news for Peru's Uruguayan coach Sergio Markarian who has begun to bring some order to the national team. Peru finished third at last year's Copa America having failed to qualify for the World Cup

since 1982.

The first division championship in chaos has given Tunisia an advantage for next week's international friendly, according to Peru coach Sergio Markarian.

The Uruguayan, who has the task of steering Peru to their first World Cup finals since 1982, was without five San Martín players in Monday's practice due to the club's dissolution.

"San Martín's withdrawal and everything that's happened is lamentable. It's been a kind of domino (effect) of bad decisions," Markarian was quoted as saying on Monday by the daily El Comercio.

"I will face an international match with players who have not played for three months. We are giving (Tunisia) an advantage," he said of the Feb. 29 away friendly in Rades.

He added that it was a good thing Peru's European exiles, who will not link up with the squad until after the weekend, were in mid-season.

These include captain Juan Vargas of Fiorentina and Hamburg striker Paolo Guerrero, top scorer at the Copa América.

The experienced Markarian's appointment in 2010 has been a bright spot amid the current gloom in Peruvian football. He steered the team to an unexpected third place at last year's Copa America in Argentina and is now looking to build a team that can reach the 2014 World Cup finals in Brazil. Peru are one from bottom of the South American qualifying group with three points.

Such a crisis marks a positive entry point however for not only reform but to refresh the players' from injury, the opportunities to be called-up and ultimately for Markarian, time on his hands with the availability of players to carry on their club duty once things are brushed up and back in order so the international duty and campaign on the road to Brazil can be brought forward for the next qualifying round in July.

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La Liga's absurd race for Champions League

LONDON CALLING



With Sam Collins in the UK

Almost everyone anticipated it. It was inevitable. But no one thought it would be this open. Four teams, maybe five at a push? Wrong. How does fourteen sound? The race for La Liga's precious final Champions League place – one in which no one can predict the winner.

The top three in Spain come May, was obvious before a ball was kicked. Valencia were always likely to snatch third place, with Real Madrid and Barcelona battling it out for the title just above them. This, everyone knew. What was less well-known last summer, was who would steal the spot just below Los Che. And now with three months of the season remaining, the intrigue has only increased. Quite simply, it's any ones. Just seven points separate 4th from 17th in La Liga. The gap between the same positions in the Premier League? 22 points. The Bundesliga? 26. Serie A? 19. No other major European league has an onslaught for a top four place on their hands like the Spanish do.

The contenders have been vacillating ever since the campaign began. Only one side has been consistent in their position, and that's the team who sat

fourth up until this weekend – Levante. The side who haven't won a trophy for 75 years. The side who spent just €210,000 last summer. The side who have won just 2 of their last 14 league games. Juan Ignacio Martinez's men would have been content with just survival in August. It's a bizarre scenario. Though no one expects the frogs to last the distance, even if they occupied 4th for four months before Sunday's 5-3 loss to Ray Vallecano. Their victory against Real Madrid in week three feels like an eternity ago. Midfielder Jose Barkero admitted the club are in "a very long slump". Only in this ludicrous race could such a stagnation occur and the side affected remain in a coveted position.

The favorites? Atletico Madrid. Under Gregorio Manzano Los Colchoneros seemed apathetic. A change of coach was imperative, and since arriving, Diego Simeone has excelled. After two spells with the club as a player (the first of which included a league title in 96'), El Cholo is overseeing an impressive turn-around this season; Three wins, four draws and just one goal conceded in La Liga has ensured an inspirational start to life in Madrid. The Vicente Calderon outfit certainly have the squad to finish fourth – with €40 striker Radamel Falcao netting 19 goals since joining from Porto and playmaker Diego pulling the strings in midfield - the fire-power at Simeone's disposal is majestic. Qatar-owned Malaga have been in and



Atletico Madrid are just one of 13 teams with a realistic chance to finish 4th in Spain's La Liga.

around the European places all season, and despite losing 6 of their last 10 league games, Manuel Pellegrini's men sit just two points off fourth-place. The side from La Rosaleda are financially in a league of their own. Owner Sheikh Abdullah Al Thani pumped €58m into the club last summer, as the likes of Jeremy Toulalan and Santi Cazorla arrived in Andalusia. Pellegrini knows his future would be secure with a finish in the Champions League places, and the former Real Madrid coach is confident the 'project' at Malaga will work out. The team who finished fourth last sea-

son, Villarreal, have endured a deplorable campaign. Juan Carlos Garrido's outstanding first 15 months in charge of the Yellow submarine were dastardly overshadowed by the opening five months of this season. A defeat away to Osasuna prior to Christmas left the 2006 European semi-finalists 17th in La Liga, meaning a change of manager was inevitable. Garrido's replacement, Jose Molina, has similarly to Simeone, enjoyed a solid few months at the helm. Molina spent a year on loan with Villarreal in the early nineties and the former Spain international has taken 11 points

from his first 7 games – a run of form which has propelled Villarreal to just seven points off a top-four position. Relegation battlers to European-place outsiders in the space of half a dozen games – this race is surely unprecedented.

If the 2011-12 season ended today, Espanyol would be preparing for that elusive Champions League play-off. After 11th and 8th place finishes in his first two seasons in charge, coach Mauricio Pochettino will know there is a genuine opportunity to snatch fourth this time around. Though, the Periqui-

tos have won just two of their last seven league games – more evidence of the manic nature of this race. Reports have linked Pochettino with a summer move to Real Madrid, not that the 39-year old is bothered: "My children go to bed every night wearing Espanyol pyjamas."

Standing in the way of Espanyol might be their old boss Marcelo Bielsa. The eccentric Argentine has put together a formidable Athletic Bilbao side since arriving at San Mames in July. Sunday's 3-0 demolition of rivals Malaga put the strength of Los Leones into perspective. With Ander Herrera and Iker Muniain – stars of Spain's under-21 European championship winning side last summer – bossing midfield and Fernando Llorente up front, Loco Bielsa will be quietly confident of a European place, though the 56-year old admits the competition is tough. "The qualities of all the contenders seem quite similar."

The outsiders? Rayo Vallecano. Back in the top-flight after an eight year absence, Rayo are in stunning form right now. Jose Sandoval's side have taken fifteen points from the last twenty-one available, and in Michu, a free signing from Celta Vigo, the Franjirrojos have the highest-scoring midfielder in the country (12 league goals). Making up the rest of this enthralling pursuit, amongst others, are astute sides like Sevilla, now under the management of Michel, and Osasuna, who shocked Barcelona last weekend by beating the champions 3-2 in Pamplona.

The three Argentines - Pochettino, Bielsa and Simeone - will be the most confident, but the erratic nature of this race means no one can really be that sure. It's capricious, constantly fluctuating and it's wonderful for the neutrals.



UCL Wrap

The Round of 16 continued this week with the second half of first legs taking place on Wednesday and Thursday mornings.

Juan Mata put Chelsea into the lead on 27 minutes against Napoli, but within 40 minutes of game time, Napoli had secured their two goal lead. Mata's goal came after a first half storm to match the temultuous conditions that the match was played in. Cech was on hand to deny Napoli several times, and when Mata applied the easiest of finishes to Fabio Canavaro's misdirected header Napoli might have been forgiven for thinking it would be one of those nights. Chelsea might have put the tie to bed if they'd been more clinical in the period after the goal, where they had several chances to score, but their weak backline would prove their undoing, as they conspired against as they allowed the clinical Lavezzi an absolute

Basel shocks Bayern Munich

age in which to pick his spot. Lavezzi didn't disappoint and Napoli were level eleven minutes later.

Cavani's goal allowed Napoli to take the lead on the brink of half time, prompting a furiously fast second half. Chelsea might have equalized but for the heroics of Napoli's defence and De Sanctis, but that was the pivotal difference. In a game where both teams played good, attacking football, one side could defend whilst the other couldn't. That was demonstrated clearly when David Luiz who gave up possession to Edison Cavani, who squared the ball to Lavezzi who finished with ease, leaving Chelsea's Champions League hopes on the verge of extinction.

In the early kick off, Real Madrid were held to a 1-1 draw in Moscow in very tough conditions. The result shouldn't worry Jose Mourinho too much, as he leaves Moscow with an away goal, and with the return leg at the Bernabeau to come, Mourinho knows that Madrid are still in a good position to take out the tie so long as they are responsible defensively.

It was Cristiano Ronaldo once again



Substitute Valentin Stocker's late goal gave Basel a stunning win over Bayern Munich

who put Madrid in the lead. The Portuguese talisman just can't stop scoring, and it was no surprise to see his name on the scoresheet once more after he took advantage of some poor defending to fire home from twelve yards out. Madrid missed a host of chances throughout the game however and were punished for their prof-

ligacy in the third minute of stoppage time when Pontus Wernbloom struck from close range to level the scores heading into the second leg.

Thursday saw two shock results occur with both FC Basel and Marseille coming out of the first leg with home wins to defend against European giants FC Bayern Munich and Inter

Milan.

FC Basel, who put Manchester United out of the competition at the group stage, continued their giant killing run when substitute Valentin Stocker four minutes from time to shock the Bavarian giants. Basel were completely deserving of their win too. They hit the woodwork twice in the first half alone,

Champions League
Round of 16 – Week 1 Results
B Leverkusen 1 – 3 Barcelona
Lyon 1 – 0 APOEL Nicosia
AC Milan 4 – 0 Arsenal
Zenit St. Petersburg 3 – 2 Benfica
Round of 16 – Week 2 Results
Napoli 3 – 1 Chelsea
CSKA Moscow 1 – 1 Real Madrid
FC Basel 1 – 0 FC Bayern Munich
Marseille 1 – 0 Inter Milan

in a half that was frenetic in it's pace. It finished 0-0 but it was by no means boring. The second half was far tighter, with both teams insistent on shutting down the space in which both sides were creating so much in the first half. It didn't stop Stocker however and now the Swiss champions have a real chance at making the quarter finals of the Champions League.

The match between Marseille and Inter was a far more drab affair, eventually settled with the last kick of the day, prolonging Inter's turgid run of form. Ayew avoided the attentions of Christian Chivu at the far post to head in the winner from Mathieu Valbuena's cross and seal the win.



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EPL Wrap



Steven Talevski

Eyes turn to fourth spot

After a weekend of no Premier League action, England's top tier competition returns this weekend with the North London derby between bitter rivals Arsenal and Tottenham.

Arsenal's fifth round exit of the FA cup with a two nil loss to Sunderland, and their four goal deficit in the Champions League tie against AC Milan, Arsenal will look to claim three points against the Spurs in their aim for a European Champions League spot next season. The coveted fourth place finish has been labelled like a trophy by Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger.

"The first trophy is to finish in the top four," he told reporters after the defeat to Sunderland.

"And that's still possible. I believe finishing fourth is vital for us, so let's focus on that."

Tottenham will go into the game with the possible returns of the star duo of former Gunner Emmanuel Adebayor and Dutch midfielder Raphael van der Vaart

Adebayor had missed Tottenham's shock nil all draw against Stevenage in the FA Cup this past weekend due to a knee injury that he had picked up in training but wrote on twitter he is hopeful to be fit for the derby.

"Just finished training, really happy with the progress, knee is looking much better. Working on my fitness for Sunday," Adebayor tweeted.

Arsenal's fourth spot may be on the line this weekend with Chelsea seeming to have a comfortable fixture at Stamford Bridge against relegation threatened Bolton.

Chelsea will go into the clash coming off a 3-1 loss away to Napoli in the Champions League as they look to overtake Arsenal in fourth spot.



It's derby day in North London this weekend as Spurs and Arsenal go head to head.

Chelsea midfielder John Obi Mikel admitted that it would be a disaster if the club doesn't qualify for next season's Champions League.

"We must finish in the top four, anything less than that is disaster," Mikel told the London Sun.

"That will ease the pressure off us to look forward to a better season where we can think of winning the title."

Chelsea will be without captain John Terry after the club confirmed that the defender will undergo surgery on his knee and may be out for up to two months.

"John has tried hard to be ready for tonight's game [against Napoli] but it was clear after training last night that it was not going to be possible," The club said in a statement on their website.

"He will undergo an exploratory arthroscopy in the next day or so, after which the club's medical team will be better placed to advise on a prognosis."

Arsenal and Chelsea aren't the only clubs with top four aspirations this season as surprise packets Newcastle United remain only one point behind the two clubs.

Newcastle hosts Wolverhampton this weekend who have caretaker manager Terry Conner in charge for his first game since the sacking of Mick Mc-

Carthy. Liverpool, who are also in the race for fourth spot will have the weekend off in the Premier League but will be in action in the Carling Cup Final at Wembley against Championship side Cardiff City as the side from Anfield look to win the club's first major trophy since 2006.

With the race for fourth spot heating up, the race for the title also takes another turn this week as Manchester City look to claim three points at home against Blackburn just three days after their Europa League clash against FC Porto.

However in the midst of their title race, the Carlos Tevez saga is continuing with the striker apologizing to the club for his conduct earlier this season for refusing to warm up in a Champions League tie against Bayern Munich.

"I wish to apologise sincerely and unreservedly to everybody I have let down and to whom my actions have caused offence," Tevez said in a statement.

"My wish is to concentrate on playing football for Manchester City Football Club."

Tevez has also withdrawn his appeal against his club for their finding of misconduct which was set to be heard by a Premier League panel this week.

Meanwhile, Tevez's old side Manchester United will hope to keep the pressure on their cross town rivals when they visit eighth placed Norwich City after also playing a Europa League fixture against Dutch side Ajax.

The battle to move out of the relegation zone also heats up this weekend with the bottom five sides not facing each other as they look to steal some important points from the clubs above them.

Wigan, who sit on bottom of the table face Aston Villa at the DW Stadium with Villa's on-loan and in form striker Robbie Keane playing his last game before his return to parent club LA Galaxy.

Other relegated threatened teams Queens Park Rangers host Fulham, Blackburn visit Manchester City, Wolverhampton face Newcastle and Bolton travel to Chelsea.

While this weekend's two other fixtures see Stoke host Swansea and Sunderland visit West Bromwich Albion.

Due to Liverpool's appearance in the Carling Cup final this weekend, Everton are the only Premier League side with no action this weekend while the date for their clash with cross town rivals Liverpool has yet to be confirmed.

Olyroos to miss Olympics for the first time since 1984

The UAE defeated the Olyroos in a Group B fixture of the AFC Asian Qualifiers for the 2012 London Olympics at a packed Mohammed bin Zayed Stadium on Wednesday night.

Watched by 28,734 spectators and the UAE National team, UAE scored a solitary goal win over the Olyroos. And the man who took them closer was Omar Abdulrahman. Omar, who plays for Al Ain in UAE's domestic competitions, scored the match-winner in the 24th minute.

UAE, whose path was made easier after Uzbekistan had lost to Iraq on Tuesday night, have one game left against Uzbekistan on March 14. And they only need to draw that game to seal a berth for their first ever Olympics.

Australia had the first look at goal on 15 minutes but midfielder Aaron Mooy's shot from the tip of the box was collected by goalkeeper Khalid Eisa. Two minutes later, UAE came close but Ahmed Khalil, who had missed the previous game against Iraq due to injury, shot wide of the post.

Australia came the closest to going ahead in the 20th minute when their captain Oliver Bozanic had a crack at goal from inside the box but UAE defender Saad Suroor made a goalline clearance.

Three minutes later, Ahmed Ali was fouled by Ben Kantarovski and Ahmed Khalil's dipping freekick was punched for a corner by goalkeeper Mathew

Ryan. And UAE took the lead through Omar Abdulrahman who fired home off a backheel pass from Rashed Eisa.

Australia had a chance to draw level five minutes before half-time but Aaron Mooy, who plies his trade in the Scottish Premier League for St. Mirren, saw his shot hit the crossbar.

UAE could have doubled it in the opening minutes of second half but Rashed Eisa muffed up a golden chance after having done all the hard work. Eisa did a solo with the defenders in hot pursuit but he fired it straight into the hands of the goalkeeper.

UAE coach Mahdi Ali took off midfielder Rashed Eisa and brought in midfielder Mohammed Fawzi in the 54th minute and later replaced forward Ahmed Ali with midfielder Haboosh Saleh in the 64th. Australian coach Aurelio Vidmar brought in forward Kerem Bulut in place of midfielder Ben Kantarovski in the 66th minute.

UAE came close to increasing the lead in the 69th minute but substitute Haboosh Saleh's sizzling left-footer just whizzed past the left upright. Australia brought in another forward in Dimitrios Petratos with 15 minutes left, while Ali Ahmed Mabkhout came in for Ahmed Khalil.

Olyroos Starting XI: Ryan, McGowan, Mullen, Jurman, Behich, Bozanic, Dugandzic (Petratos 74'), Kantarovski (Bulut 66'), Hoffman, Mooy (Amini 88'), Visconte.



The Ruthless World of Unfair Dismissals

London Eye



Robert Davis

As the Premiership and Football League start to enter their final stages, panic buttons are being pushed up and down the country. Owners and board members are looking for someone to come in and change their fortunes, unless you're top of the league or exceeding expectations, it appears no ones job in football is safe (unless you're Sir Alex Ferguson).

Some dismissals have come as a surprise to everyone over the past couple of weeks. Not only the managers getting the sack, but the timing of the sackings.

Why give a manager money over a crucial January transfer window, only to go and get someone else in a month later?

Lee Clark can count himself as the unluckiest out of the crop of managers receiving their marching orders. In charge of Huddersfield Town since late 2008, his first full season (2009-2010) saw Clark guide his side to a play off position, only to be beaten by eventual winners Millwall in the semi final. He did an even better job the following year and not only got his side to the play off final (albeit losing 3-0 to Peterborough) but also went on a 25 game unbeaten run, a club record that carried on into the following season. A total of 43 matches unbeaten in the league.



Lee Clark was shown the door at Huddersfield Town after their third loss in 55 matches.

Clearly not good enough for The Terriers chairman Dean Hoyle and the board of directors, Clark was duly given the sack after a 1-0 loss to fellow promotion rivals Sheffield United, only their third loss in 55 league matches.

Clark promoted good, attractive football and to sack a young English manager in a time when we seem to be crying out for an influx of that type of coach leaves a bitter taste in the mouth.

In the meantime, Huddersfield appointed Simon Grayson, who had only the previous week been sacked by Leeds chairman Ken Bates.

Bates isn't the most popular man in football. Despised by Leeds fans and many others, he sacked Grayson when he was asked for money to buy a midfielder after influential captain Jonny Howson was sold to Premiership side Norwich City. Bates snapped back and reminded Grayson that there was already nine

midfielders at the club, resulting in the former Blackpool boss being relieved of his role.

The Whites chairman did give the team an ultimatum at the beginning of the season and said that Grayson would go if promotion wasn't achieved. Apart from being true to his word, with Leeds currently coasting in mid-table, this is still only their second year back in the Championship and after seeing Norwich and Southampton do so well after gaining promotion from League One, Bates decided to bring in someone new.

The man he did bring in has a fantastic record at Championship level. Neil Warnock will guarantee one thing if given time and that is promotion. Warnock's availability has come at just the right time for everyone at Leeds except Grayson, who has a right to feel hard done by.

With panic buttons being pushed in the

Football League, the Premiership was no different as Wolverhampton Wanderers also decided to let go long serving Mick McCarthy. A man who has not only entertained us in press conferences and interviews, but someone who got Wolves back into the top tier of English football and has kept them there for a third season with a squad that respectively has no right to stay in the Premiership.

McCarthy was under tremendous pressure from Wolves fans, who after two seasons in the Premier League clearly expected Champions League football. Wolves were always going to be a relegation threatened side in the short term, slowly but surely though, McCarthy was starting to attract quality players to the club. Roger Johnson was outstanding for Birmingham City in the two years he was at the club and could have easily played for a team challenging higher in the table, but McCarthy managed to at-



Leeds Utd chairman, Ken Bates.

tract him to Wolves. Along with the likes of Jamie O'Hara, Kevin Doyle and the hugely underrated Steven Fletcher as well as bringing in high calibre loan signings Emmanuel Frimpong (albeit out for the season) and Sebastien Bassong, McCarthy was starting to assemble a team capable of competing away from the relegation zone.

It's hard to see who will come in and do a better job at Wolves than McCarthy. Which manager will want to take over at Wolves? Alan Curbishley, someone who has been out of football for almost four years decided the job wasn't for him after being offered the position, Warnock opted for Championship side Leeds and their final candidate, Steve Bruce also seems reluctant to take the job. Wolves are now looking at the prospect of going into their league match on Saturday with no manager.

Why make the snap decision to sack

a manager at such an important time of the season? For McCarthy, losing 5-1 at home to your closest rivals doesn't help. In the end it's only a good decision if a chairman definitely has someone else not only willing to take the job, but someone who will do a better job than the previous regime.

Sunderland earlier in the season were on a terrible run of form. Steve Bruce had spent a lot of money in the summer, yet was playing boring, unattractive football considering the players he had at his disposal. Bruce was sacked at the end of November with more than half the season left to play. On the 3rd of December, Martin O'Neill was appointed, instantly galvanising the same team Bruce had and now sit safely in the top half of the table and top of the form table since his appointment.

An instant impact is what the board of directors who make these snap decisions at this time of the season want. So for Huddersfield, Leeds and Wolves, all each with their own dilemmas, it appears only Leeds and Bates have come out looking better than before in terms of that quick impact they're all after.

Huddersfield will still make the play-offs, something they would have done under Clark anyway, whilst Wolves will see their relegation odds increased the longer they go on without a manager.

Managers like Martin O'Neill and Neil Warnock don't become available very often. Not that it will stop chairmen pushing the panic button and plunging their club into a bigger 'crisis' they were in before. I say crisis. It's only a true crisis when you see Iain Dowie appearing in your clubs dugout to save you.



Luca Cetta

All set for San Siro showdown

Milan and Juventus geared up for their huge clash this weekend with victories as Roma celebrated yet another Francesco Totti milestone. Meanwhile, Lazio were mauled at Palermo and Inter were humbled once more.

Juventus were seeking a return to winning ways against Catania after a build-up dominated by the number of penalties – or lack thereof – awarded this season. Juve are at the bottom of the penalty table, with only one coming their way. This was placed under the spotlight in Parma during the 0-0 draw, however the more pressing issue was the failure to convert possession and chances into goals.

Pablo Barrientos gave Catania the lead after just four minutes; nonetheless Juve were back on level terms when Andrea Pirlo curled in his first goal from the club with a trademark free kick. It took until 15 minutes from time for Giorgio Chiellini to nod in a Pirlo set-piece and then Fabio Quagliarella netted the third after another Pirlo assist. Bizarrely, substitute goalkeeper Marco Storari managed to injure Quagliarella and Simone Pepe in the celebration! Both received attention following unintentional blows to the head.

Coach Antonio Conte said his side proved their strength: "We'd never gone behind at home before, but did well and showed maturity, giving a strong response to the fans and proving this is a strong side."

Milan responded with a 3-1 win of



The race for the Scudetto heats up as Milan and Juve come face to face this weekend in a mouthwatering clash between first and second.

their own, away at Cesena. The Rossoneri started strongly and missed a number of chances before on-debut Sulley Muntari reacted first to a spill from Francesco Antonioli. Urby Emanuelson added a knockout blow just a minute later and Robinho the cherry on the cake with a goal minutes into the second half. The loss leaves Cesena rock-bottom in Serie A.

Inter warmed up for their midweek Champions League match versus Marseille in disastrous fashion, on the receiving end of a 3-0 home thrashing by Bologna. Marco Di Vaio scored twice and Robert Acquafresca a late sealer to heap more pressure on Claudio Ranieri. Inter President Massimo Moratti could not bear to watch, leaving the stadium at half-time.

It was Francesco Totti's 700th Roma appearance on Sunday and the Giallorossi celebrated with a 1-0 win over Parma. On-loan Parma striker Fabio Borini scored the only goal to put Roma back on track. While they celebrated, Lazio were left to pick up the pieces after suffering a 5-1 thumping in Palermo. They could only field one fit defender in Andre Dias and were duly humbled.

Napoli roared back into Champions

League contention with a 3-0 win at Fiorentina, marked by an Edinson Cavani double and a fine solo effort from Ezequiel Lavezzi. They are just five points behind Lazio and Udinese, who are level in third on 42 points. Without Antonio Di Natale, the Friuli side struggled to break-down Cagliari and were left frustrated by a 0-0 draw.

Lecce gave their safety bid a push with a 4-1 drubbing of Siena. Juan Cuadrado scored the pick of the goals, running from deep inside his own half and chipping the finish over Gianluca Pegolo. Genoa lost their run of home wins with a 1-0 reverse against Chievo, while Novara kept a third consecutive clean sheet in a 0-0 draw with Atalanta.

The match of the round this weekend is undoubtedly the Stadio Giuseppe Meazza showdown. Milan holds a one point advantage over Juve, who have a game in hand. Rossoneri boss Massimiliano Allegri claimed: "The challenge on Saturday is very important, but it is not essential." Milan are sweating on Zlatan Ibrahimovic's appeal to have his three match suspension downgraded to two, which will ensure the Swede is available. Kevin-Prince Boateng is injured again and expected to miss a

month, while on the other side Conte has a full squad to choose from, with Arturo Vidal returning from suspension.

Ex-Milan star Pirlo is ready for a crucial return to his former home: "The return to San Siro will be exciting, but I won't be emotional after that, as the game is too important. I don't think we are the favourites for this match." Juve may continue with their 3-5-2 formation, one that saw victory over Catania and recently in the Coppa Italia away at Milan.

In another intriguing battle, Napoli hosts Inter. After a fantastic win in Europe, Napoli will look to build from that result to further close in on third place. Inter suffered a last-minute loss in France but Ranieri's main issue is balancing Wesley Sneijder in the side.

Lazio must put the Palermo disappointment behind them at home to Fiorentina. They have recovered a few defenders such as Stefan Radu, but will be without Coach Edy Reja, who was sent off in Sicily. Incidentally, Reja tended his resignation on Wednesday, but the club refused. Fiorentina went down to Bologna in midweek, 2-0.

Misfiring Atalanta hosts Roma, who will be looking for a first away win since late December. Totti is suspended, but in-form Borini is expected to start. Atalanta have scored just three goals in eight matches and cannot afford to creep closer to the relegation battle. Udinese will be seeking a return to the winners list away at Bologna, who are on a seven-match unbeaten streak.

Cagliari entertains a rejuvenated Lecce, while Chievo will look to put more distance between themselves and the relegation zone at home to Cesena. Catania won a catch-up game versus Siena in midweek and will aim for two-in-a-row as they face Novara, while Genoa have a chance to redeem themselves at home to Parma. Finally, Siena host perennial road-strugglers Palermo.

Last Minute CSKA Goal Gives Mourinho Grief

Viva Espana



Pepe Lopez

A last minute goal by CSKA Moscow's Pontus Wernbloom has kept the Russian club's hopes of a major upset against the Spanish La Liga Leaders Real Madrid in the UEFA Champions League Round of 16.

Pontus described his last minute volley equaliser, as "something to tell the grand children". Having had the better of the chances and taken an early lead from top goalscorer Ronaldo, CSKA bravely fought their way back into the two legged contest, to be decided in Madrid at the Santiago Bernabeu on the 14th of March. Spanish compatriots, Barcelona FC look all but assured of their passage to the Champions League Quarter-Finals, when they host the 2nd leg, with a comfortable

3-1 away win in the first leg over Germany's Bayer Leverkusen. Real Madrid sponsors, Bwin, have Barcelona \$2.40 favorites for to win this year's Champions League, with Real Madrid at \$3.40, Bayern Munich are valued at \$5.75, whilst AC Milan look a great value bet at \$15, having drawn with Barcelona 2-2 at the Nou Camp in the early stages of the Champions League earlier this season.

Jose Mourinho, Real Madrid Coach, had this to say of his club's late draw; "Without doing anything out of this world, we should have been able to score a second goal. But it's not a bad result.

Having led the game and conceded so late it doesn't leave a good taste in the mouth, but, at the same time, it's not a drama. I'm not happy but not all that sad.

Last year against Lyon it was a similar situation at this stage and we managed to win the second leg at home. We're confident we can do so again this time

around."

Key to CSKA Moscow's hopes is Japanese International Keisuke Honda. CSKA Coach Leonid Slutsky was full of praise for the midfielder; "After Honda's introduction we became more dangerous in attack. Today he played even longer than he actually can physically. I hope he will be ready for all 90 minutes in Madrid."

Meanwhile, with Barcelona all but out of the running of the Spanish La Liga race for this season, there is much speculation surrounding their Coach Pep Guardiola.

Pep has yet to sign a new deal with the Catalan club, fueling talk that Pep may be interested in a possible contract with the Spanish National Team.

Former president of Barca, Joan Laporta, had this to say; "He's giving it all as a coach and he will a thoughtful and reasoned decision – and it shall be respected by the club.

He always said he would renew every year and he has every right to take time to think before making an important decision.

I understand this period of reflection. Guardiola is sufficiently mature and intelligent."

In the match of the week in La Liga on Sunday, Barcelona face a tricky fixture in Madrid this weekend, against Real's cross town rivals Atletico.

Atletico are undefeated in 8 matches since new Coach Diego Simeone was appointed as the Madrid club's new Coach.



No way, Jose!

Balkan Wrap



Alex Milic

Serbia

White Eagles European Team of the Week.

GK – Bojan Jorgacevic (Club Brugge)

Has been a vital part of the Belgian giants team this season since signing from rivals Gent. Was instrumental in sides league win over the weekend despite conceding one goal Brugge defeated Kortrijk 2:1. Club Brugge is seven points behind league leaders Anderlecht in the league standings.

Defence

Neven Subotic (Borussia Dortmund)

Since returning from injury, Neven has regained his spot in the Borussia backline and has been in great form. He played over the weekend against Hertha Berlin and was key in the sides clean sheet against Hertha Berlin in a 1:0 win. Neven has played 14 times in the Bundesliga this season and his club are on top of the table with a three

point advantage over second placed Borussia Monchengladbach.

Milan Bisevac (PSG)

Despite his side conceding two goals over the weekend in a 2:2 draw against Montpellier in the top of the table clash, the right back has been a key player for Carlo Ancelotti's side starting 12 of his 13 matches and was rewarded with the Ligue 1 Player of the Month Trophy for January. Bisevac did however pick up a knock over the weekend and is uncertain for the match against Lyon this weekend.

Branislav Ivanovic (Chelsea)

Has been the only consistent player for the 'Blues' this season in a season to forget for the club. With the title race all but over for Chelsea, the club has its sights on the UEFA Champions League and the FA Cup in which Chelsea were held by Birmingham City 1:1, Ivanovic set up the equaliser for Sturidge. Ivanovic has played in nearly all of the clubs matches this season.

Dusan Basta (Udinese)

Probably his best season in his football career. The former Red Star man has been in top form this season for high fliers Udinese which has seen him play 22 matches in the first 24 Rounds of the Serie A this season. He has



Milan Bisevic has been starring for Paris St Germain

been a starter in all of the matches and has even scored a couple of times. A return to the Serbia squad is surely on the cards.

Filip Duricic (Herenveen)

Duricic has been instrumental for the Dutch club in midfield this season scoring seven goals and setting up five. He has been a key part of the sides amazing run of seven wins in a row in the Eredivisie which sees Herenveen within two points of the top clubs on the standings. The future of Serbian football. Played well in 1:0 win over NAC Breda over the weekend.

Dusan Tadic (Groningen)

Tadic was a key part of Groningens fantastic 3:0 win over giants PSV over the weekend. Tadic has played in nearly all of the clubs matches this season and has scored 3 times in 22 appearances in which he has set up 10 goals and is one of the leaders for assists in Europe. He was equal second last year for most assists on the continent. Definitely a Serbia National Team player for the upcoming World Cup Qualifying campaign.

Milos Maris (Lierse)

The former Olympiakos midfielder has been playing good football this season

and his goal over the weekend insured Lierse's safety in the top flight for another season. The goal was a reward for his fine form and he is quickly becoming a key figure at the club.

Milan Jovanovic (Anderlecht)

Anderlecht has been playing fine football all season both domestically and in Europe. They lead the pack in Belgium and Jovanovic has been a mainstay of the side since joining from Liverpool. He scored the last goal against Westerlo in 3:1 which was his eighth goal of the season. Slowly finding the form which attracted the interest of the likes of Liverpool.

Stefan Scepovic (Hapoel)

Scored the first goal in his sides 2:0 league win over Ironi Ramat. He is currently sixth on the list of top marksmen in the Israeli Championship with 11 goals to his name. Finally at a club

in which he can play regular football and finding his touch also. A contended for the National Team along with his brother in the not so distant future.

Ivica Ilijev (Wisla)

The veteran has been in sparkling form over the last couple of seasons. He scored his first goal for his new club in the Polish League over the weekend in the sides 2:2 draw against Zaglebie. Ilijev was the top scorer of the Serbian League when he arrived to Wisla. In a sad note Olympiakos striker and Serbia veteran Marko Pantelic is out for the remainder of the season with an injury suffered in a league match over the weekend. Pantelic has been fantastic since signing for the club and this season has scored 7 league goals in 9 matches. This will be a huge loss for the Greek Champions.



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ENGLAND EPL



	Last5games Most recent first							
	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Manchester City	25	19	3	3	64	19	+45	60
2 Manchester United	25	18	4	3	61	25	+36	58
3 Tottenham Hotspur	25	16	5	4	49	25	+24	53
4 Arsenal	25	13	4	8	48	35	+13	43
5 Chelsea	25	12	7	6	44	31	+13	43
6 Newcastle United	25	12	6	7	36	36	+0	42
7 Liverpool	25	10	9	6	29	23	+6	39
8 Norwich City	25	9	8	8	37	41	-4	35
9 Sunderland	25	9	6	10	34	26	+8	33
10 Everton	25	9	6	10	26	27	-1	33
11 Swansea City	25	7	9	9	28	32	-4	30
12 Fulham	25	7	9	9	31	36	-5	30
13 Stoke City	25	8	6	11	24	38	-14	30
14 West Bromwich ...	25	8	5	12	29	35	-6	29
15 Aston Villa	25	6	10	9	29	34	-5	28
16 Queens Park Ra...	25	5	6	14	27	44	-17	21
17 Blackburn Rovers	25	5	6	14	37	56	-19	21
18 Wolverhampton ...	25	5	6	14	28	49	-21	21
19 Bolton Wanderers	25	6	2	17	29	51	-22	20
20 Wigan Athletic	25	4	7	14	23	50	-27	19

GERMANY Bundesliga



	Last5games Most recent first							
	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Borussia Dortmund	22	15	4	3	47	14	+33	49
2 Borussia M'gla...	22	14	4	4	36	13	+23	46
3 Bayern München	22	14	3	5	49	14	+35	45
4 Schalke 04	22	14	2	6	50	28	+22	44
5 Werder Bremen	22	10	6	6	37	36	+1	36
6 Bayer Leverkusen	22	9	7	6	32	29	+3	34
7 Hannover 96	22	8	10	4	27	27	+0	34
8 Wolfsburg	22	8	3	11	27	42	-15	27
9 Stuttgart	22	7	5	10	33	32	+1	26
10 Hoffenheim	22	6	8	8	24	26	-2	26
11 Hamburger SV	22	6	8	8	27	37	-10	26
12 Nürnberg	22	7	4	11	21	32	-11	25
13 Mainz 05	22	5	9	8	30	36	-6	24
14 Köln	22	7	3	12	30	43	-13	24
15 Hertha BSC	22	4	8	10	25	37	-12	20
16 Kaiserslautern	22	3	9	10	16	28	-12	18
17 Augsburg	22	3	9	10	20	37	-17	18
18 Freiburg	22	4	6	12	27	47	-20	18

THE CHAMPIONSHIP



	Last5games Most recent first							
	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 West Ham United	31	18	6	7	51	32	+19	60
2 Southampton	32	17	8	7	58	32	+26	59
3 Birmingham City	31	15	9	7	50	28	+22	54
4 Reading	31	16	6	9	39	27	+12	54
5 Cardiff City	32	14	11	7	50	39	+11	53
6 Middlesbrough	31	14	11	6	38	32	+6	53
7 Blackpool	32	14	10	8	53	42	+11	52
8 Hull City	31	15	6	10	31	25	+6	51
9 Brighton & Hov...	32	14	8	10	36	33	+3	50
10 Leeds United	32	14	6	12	52	48	+4	48
11 Burnley	32	14	5	13	44	37	+7	47
12 Crystal Palace	31	11	10	10	33	30	+3	43
13 Leicester City	31	11	9	11	42	37	+5	42
14 Barnsley	32	12	6	14	45	51	-6	42
15 Derby County	31	12	6	13	33	41	-8	42
16 Ipswich Town	31	12	4	15	50	57	-7	40
17 Watford	32	10	10	12	36	47	-11	40
18 Peterborough U...	31	10	7	14	50	51	-1	37
19 Portsmouth	31	9	8	14	33	34	-1	35
20 Millwall	32	7	10	15	31	44	-13	31
21 Bristol City	32	8	7	17	27	49	-22	31
22 Nottingham Forest	31	8	4	19	26	49	-23	28
23 Coventry City	32	6	7	19	28	46	-18	25
24 Doncaster Rovers	30	6	6	18	26	51	-25	24

Greece Super League



	Last5games Most recent first							
	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Panathinaikos	22	17	3	2	43	16	+27	54
2 Olympiakos Piraeus	22	16	4	2	48	14	+34	52
3 PAOK	22	11	6	5	30	17	+13	39
4 AEK Athens	21	11	4	6	27	22	+5	37
5 Atromitos	21	9	7	5	22	19	+3	34
6 OFI	21	9	5	7	22	18	+4	32
7 Asteras Tripolis	22	9	4	9	14	20	-6	31
8 Aris	22	7	9	6	21	18	+3	30
9 Xanthi	22	8	5	9	24	30	+0	29
10 Ergotelis	22	6	5	11	20	30	-10	23
11 Panionios	22	6	5	11	17	22	-5	23
12 Levadiakos	20	6	4	10	15	26	-11	22
13 PAS Giannina	20	4	6	10	17	25	-8	18
14 Panaitolikos	22	4	6	12	14	28	-14	18
15 Kerkyra	21	4	6	11	15	29	-14	18
16 Doxa Dramas	20	3	3	14	8	29	-21	12

SPAIN La Liga



	Last5games Most recent first							
	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Real Madrid	23	20	1	2	79	21	+58	61
2 Barcelona	23	15	6	2	68	17	+51	51
3 Valencia	23	11	7	5	36	27	+9	40
4 Athletic Club	23	8	9	6	37	30	+7	33
5 Espanyol	23	9	6	8	26	27	-1	33
6 Atlético Madrid	23	8	8	7	32	28	+4	32
7 Levante	23	9	5	9	32	34	-2	32
8 Rayo Vallecano	23	9	4	10	32	35	-3	31
9 Málaga	23	9	4	10	28	35	-7	31
10 Osasuna	23	7	10	6	26	37	-11	31
11 Sevilla	23	7	8	8	24	26	-2	29
12 Real Betis	23	9	2	12	27	31	-4	29
13 Mallorca	23	7	7	9	23	28	-5	28
14 Getafe	23	7	7	9	23	30	-7	28
15 Granada	23	8	4	11	21	32	-11	28
16 Real Sociedad	23	7	6	10	26	34	-8	27
17 Villarreal	23	6	8	9	23	34	-11	26
18 Racing Santander	23	4	11	8	18	30	-12	23
19 Sporting Gijón	23	5	5	13	21	44	-23	20
20 Real Zaragoza	23	3	6	14	18	40	-22	15

HOLLAND Eredivisie



	Last5games Most recent first							
	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 PSV	22	13	6	3	57	26	+31	45
2 AZ	22	14	3	5	45	21	+24	45
3 Heerenveen	22	12	7	3	49	31	+18	43
4 Twente	21	12	6	3	58	23	+35	42
5 Feyenoord	22	12	5	5	45	28	+17	41
6 Ajax	22	11	7	4	55	31	+24	40
7 Vitesse	22	9	5	8	27	27	+0	32
8 Groningen	22	9	5	8	35	38	-3	32
9 Roda JC	22	10	1	11	39	47	-8	31
10 Heracles	22	8	6	8	37	31	+6	30
11 Utrecht	22	6	7	9	35	39	-4	25
12 RKC Waalwijk	22	7	4	11	25	35	-10	25
13 ADO Den Haag	22	6	6	10	27	44	-17	24
14 NEC	22	7	2	13	21	34	-13	23
15 NAC Breda	22	6	4	12	25	36	-11	22
16 VVV	22	5	4	13	25	51	-26	19
17 Excelsior	22	3	6	13	16	48	-32	15
18 De Graafschap	21	3	4	14	19	50	-31	13

LEAGUE ONE



	Last5games Most recent first							
	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Charlton Athletic	31	20	9	2	57	23	+34	69
2 Sheffield United	30	19	5	6	58	29	+29	62
3 Sheffield Wedn...	32	17	6	9	54	41	+13	57
4 Huddersfield Town	30	14	13	3	57	30	+27	55
5 Milton Keynes Dons	31	15	10	6	61	35	+26	55
6 Stevenage	29	13	9	7	44	26	+18	48
7 Carlisle United	30	12	10	8	43	48	-5	46
8 AFC Bournemouth	32	12	8	12	38	38	+0	44
9 Brentford	30	11	10	9	43	37	+6	43
10 Notts County	31	12	7	12	46	44	+2	43
11 Hartlepool United	31	11	8	12	39	37	+2	41
12 Colchester United	29	10	9	10	41	45	-4	39
13 Preston North End	30	11	6	13	43	50	-7	39
14 Bury	31	11	6	14	40	51	-11	39
15 Leyton Orient	30	10	8	12	33	43	-10	38
16 Oldham Athletic	28	9	8	11	34	43	-9	35
17 Tranmere Rovers	31	8	10	13	31	37	-6	34
18 Yeovil Town	31	8	9	14	39	52	-13	33
19 Exeter City	32	8	9	15	30	47	-17	33
20 Walsall	31	6	13	12	30	36	-6	31
21 Scunthorpe United	30	6	13	11	38	45	-7	31
22 Rochdale	31	6	10	15	29	51	-22	28
23 Chesterfield	31	6	9	16	36	52	-16	27
24 Wycombe Wanderers	32	7	5	20	39	63	-24	26

France Ligue 1



	Last5games Most recent first							
	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 PSG	24	15	6	3	40	21	+19	51
2 Montpellier	24	15	5	4	47	25	+22	50
3 Lille	24	12	9	3	42	26	+16	45
4 Saint-Étienne	24	12	6	6	33	26	+7	42
5 Olympique Mars...	23	10	9	4	34	22	+12	39
6 Olympique Lyon	24	12	3	9	37	28	+9	39
7 Stade Rennes	24	11	6	7	33	29	+4	39
8 Toulouse	24	10	7	7	25	23	+2	37
9 Bordeaux	24	9	9	6	30	27	+3	36
10 Valenciennes	24	7	6	11	24	27	-3	27
11 Caen	24	7	6	11	30	36	-6	27
12 Lorient	24	6	9	9	24	30	-6	27
13 Brest	24	4	14	6	21	22	-1	26
14 Dijon	24	7	5	12	29	42	-13	26
15 Evian TG	23	5	9	9	31	37	-6	24



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NIKE POLO SHIRTS \$25 NIKE JACKETS \$35



Hoodies



Away Kit



Soccerroo Kit



Polos



Jackets



Tees



Jackets



Caps



Polos